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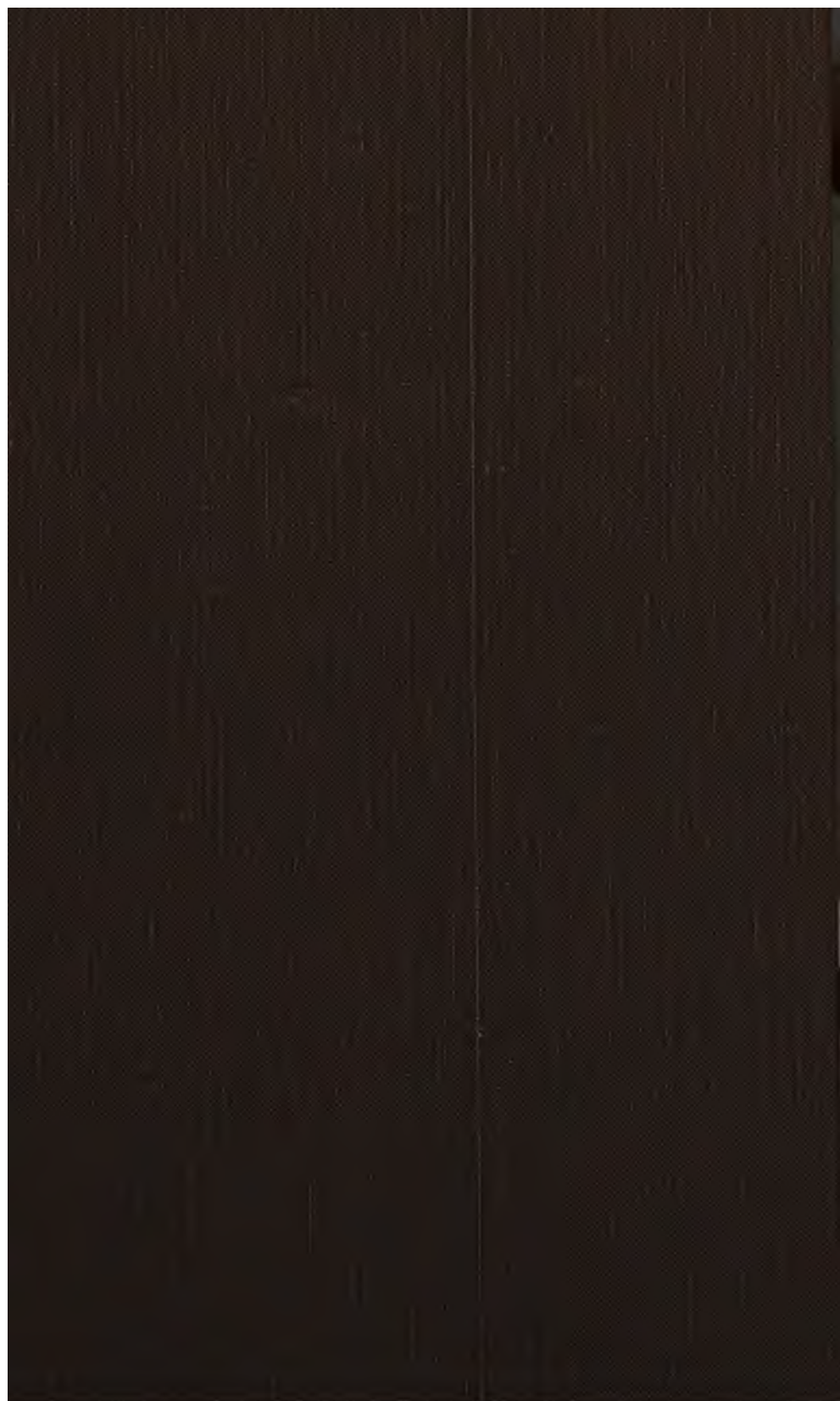
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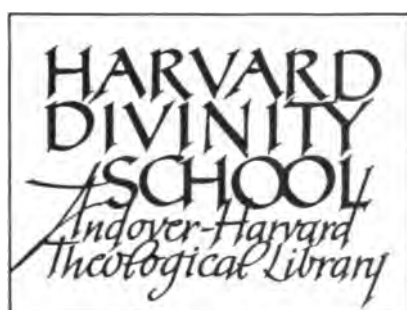
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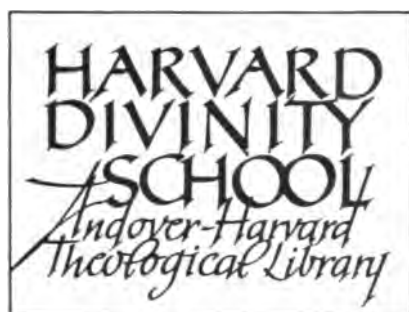
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AN APPEAL
TO THE
RELIGION, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY
OF
THE INHABITANTS
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE,
IN BEHALF OF THE
NEGRO SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

BY
WM WILBERFORCE, ESQ., M. P.

Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his
chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without
wages, and giveth him not for his work. **JEREMIAH.**

Do justice, and love mercy. **MICAH.**

LONDON:
FOR J. HATCHARD AND SON,
187, PICCADILLY.

1823.



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AN

A P P E A L,

&c. &c.

To all the inhabitants of the British Empire, who value the favour of God, or are alive to the interests or honour of their country — to all who have any respect for justice, or any feelings of humanity, I would solemnly address myself. I call upon them, as they shall hereafter answer, in the great day of account, for the use they shall have made of any power or influence with which Providence may have entrusted them, to employ their best endeavours, by all lawful and constitutional means, to mitigate, and, as soon as it may be safely done, to terminate the Negro Slavery of the British Colonies; a system of the grossest injustice, of the most heathenish irreligion and immorality, of the most unprecedented degradation, and unrelenting cruelty.

At any time, and under any circumstances, from such a heavy load of guilt as this oppression amounts to, it would be our interest no less than our duty to absolve ourselves. But I will not attempt to conceal, that the present embarrassments and dis-

tress of our country—a distress, indeed, in which the West Indians themselves have largely participated—powerfully enforce on me the urgency of the obligation under which we lie, to commence, without delay, the preparatory measures for putting an end to a national crime of the deepest moral malignity.

The long continuance of this system, like that of its parent the Slave Trade, can only be accounted for by the generally prevailing ignorance of its real nature, and of its great and numerous evils. Some of the abuses which it involves have, indeed, been drawn into notice. But when the public attention has been attracted to this subject, it has been unadvisedly turned to particular instances of cruelty, rather than to the system in general, and to those essential and incurable vices which will invariably exist wherever the power of man over man is unlimited. Even at this day, few of our countrymen, comparatively speaking, are at all apprised of the real condition of the bulk of the Negro Population; and, perhaps, many of our non-resident West Indian proprietors are full as ignorant of it as other men. Often, indeed, the most humane of the number, (many of them are men whose humanity is unquestionable,) are least of all aware of it, from estimating, not unnaturally, the actual state of the case, by the benevolence of their own well meant, but unavailing directions to their managers in the western hemisphere.

The persuasion, that it is to the public ignorance of the actual evils of West Indian Slavery that we can alone ascribe its having been suffered so long to remain unreformed and almost unnoticed, is strongly confirmed by referring to what passed when the question for abolishing the Slave Trade was seriously debated in 1792. For then, on the general ground merely of the incurable injustice and acknowledged evils of slavery, aggravated, doubtless, by the consideration that it was a slavery forcibly imposed on unoffending men for our advantage, many of the most strenuous and most formidable opponents of the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade charged us with gross inconsistency, in not fairly following up our own arguments, and proposing the gradual extinction also of slavery itself. "If," they argued, "it is contrary, as you maintain, to the soundest principles of justice, no less than to the clearest dictates of humanity, to permit the seizure, and transportation across the Atlantic, of innocent men to labour for our benefit, can it be more just, or less inhuman, to leave the victims of our rapacity to a life of slavery and degradation, as the hopeless lot of themselves and their descendants for ever? If, indeed, it had been true, as was alleged by the African merchants, that the slaves were only the convicts of Africa, condemned after a fair trial, or that they were delivered by the mercy of their British purchasers from becoming the victims of a bloody superstition, or of a relent-

less despotism, or of cruel intestine wars,—in short, if, as was urged in defence of the traffic, the situation of the slaves in Africa was so bad that it was worth while, even on the plainest principles of humanity, to bring them away, and to place them in a Christian community, though at the price of all the sufferings they must undergo during the process of their deliverance, yet even then our detaining them as *slaves* longer than should be necessary for civilizing them, and enabling them to maintain themselves by their own industry, would be indefensible. But when, as we maintained, all these pleas had been proved to be not merely gross falsehoods, but a cruel mockery of the wretched sufferers, how much more strongly were we bound not to desert them so soon as they should be landed in the West Indies; but to provide as early as possible for their deliverance from a bondage which we ourselves declared to have been originally unjust and cruel. But whatever shadow of a plea might have existed for reducing the imported Africans to slavery, surely none could be urged for retaining, in the same hopeless state, their progeny to the latest generation."

Such was, I repeat it, the reasoning of many of our greatest and ablest opponents, as well as of some of our warmest friends. Such more especially was the argument of our most powerful antagonist in the House of Commons; and, on these grounds, he, thirty years ago, proposed, that in less than eight years, which of

course would have expired at the beginning of the present century, not only should the Slave Trade cease, but the extinction of slavery should itself commence. He proposed that from that hour every new-born Negro infant should be free; subject only, when he should attain to puberty, to a species of apprenticeship for a few years, to repay the owner for the expence of maintaining him during the period of infancy and boyhood. Can I here forbear remarking, that if the advocates for immediate abolition could have foreseen that the feelings of the House of Commons, then apparently so warmly excited, and so resolutely fixed on the instant extinction of the Slave Trade, would so soon subside into a long and melancholy apathy; and had they in consequence acceded to these proposals, the slavery of the West Indies would by this time nearly have expired, and we should be now rejoicing in the delightful change which the mass of our Negro Population would have experienced, from a state of ignominious bondage to the condition of a free and happy peasantry.

And by whom was this proposal made? Was it by some hot-headed enthusiast, some speculative votary of the rights of man? No, by the late Lord Melville, then Mr. Dundas, a statesman of many great and rare endowments, of a vigorous intellect, and superior energy of mind; but to whom no one ever imputed an extravagant zeal for speculative rights or modern theories. And let it be taken into account in what

character he suggested this measure. In that which seemed to give a pledge not only for its justice but for its expediency ; — that of the partizan and acknowledged patron of the West Indian body ; and at the very moment when he was most conversant with all their affairs, and naturally most alive to all their interests. If any emotions of surprise, therefore, should be excited by my present appeal, it should be, that it has been so long delayed, rather than that it is now brought forward ; that previously to our commencing our endeavours for the mitigation, and ultimate extinction of slavery, we should have suffered twenty-two long years to elapse, beyond that interval for notice and preparation, which even the advocate of the West Indians himself had voluntarily proposed, as what appeared to him to be at once safe and reasonable.

It is due also to the character of the late Mr. Burke to state, that long before the subject of the Slave Trade had engaged the public attention, his large and sagacious mind, though far from being fully informed of the particulars of the West Indian system, had become sensible of its deeply criminal nature. He had even devised a plan for ameliorating, and by degrees putting an end both to the Slave Trade and to the state of slavery itself in the West Indies. He proposed, by education, and above all, by religious instruction, to prepare the poor degraded slaves for the enjoyment of civil rights ; taking them, in the mean time, into the guardianship and superintendence of

officers to be appointed by the British government. It scarcely needs be remarked, in how great a degree Mr. Burke was an enemy to all speculative theories; and his authority will at least absolve those who now undertake the cause of the Negro Slaves, from the imputation of harshly and unwarrantably disturbing a wholesome and legitimate system of civil subordination.

But if such were the just convictions produced in the mind of Mr. Burke, though very imperfectly acquainted with the vices of the West India system — still more, if it was conceded by many of those who opposed the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade, more especially by that politic statesman, Mr. Dundas, that a state of slavery, considered merely as a violation of the natural rights of human beings, being unjust in its origin, must be unwarrantable in its continuance — what would have been the sentiments and feelings produced in all generous and humane minds by our West Indian slavery, had they known the detail of its great and manifold evils?

The importance of proving, that the alleged decrease of the slaves arose from causes which it was in the master's power easily to remove, led the abolitionists of the Slave Trade, in stating the actual vices of the West Indian system, to dwell much, and too exclusively, perhaps, on the slaves being under-fed and over-worked, and on the want of due medical care and medical comforts. These evils, which are

indeed very great, must, of course, be aggravated where the planters were in embarrassed circumstances, notoriously the situation of the greater part of the owners of West Indian estates. But, speaking generally, there exists essentially, in the system itself, from various causes, a natural tendency towards the maximum of labour, and the minimum of food and other comforts. That such was the case in general, whatever exceptions there might be in particular instances, was decisively established by the testimony even of West Indian authorities; and it was fatally confirmed by the decrease of the slaves in almost all our settlements. No other satisfactory explanation could be given of this melancholy fact; for it is contrary to universal experience as to the Negro race, not in their own country only, where they are remarkably prolific, but in the case of the domestic slaves, even in our sugar Colonies. The free Negroes and Mulattoes, and also the Maroons*, in the island of Jamaica, the Charaibs† of St. Vincent, and the Negroes of Bencoolen were all known to increase their numbers, though under circumstances far from favourable to population; and, above all, a striking contrast was found in the rapid native in-

* The descendants of the Negro slaves who fled into the woods, when Jamaica was taken by Venables and Vernon, under Oliver Cromwell, and who, about eighty years ago, were settled in separate villages as free Negroes.

† The descendants of the crew of an African ship which was wrecked on the island about a century ago.

crease of the Negro slaves in the United States of America, though situated in a climate far less suited to the Negro constitution than that of the West Indies. There alone, in a climate much the same as that of Africa, it was declared impossible even to keep up their numbers, without continual importations. This fact alone was a strong presumptive proof, and was raised by various concurrent facts and arguments into a positive certainty, that the decrease of the slaves arose in no small degree, not only from an excess of labour, but from the want of a requisite supply of food, and of other necessities and comforts. The same phenomena, I fear, are still found to exist, and to indicate the continuance of the same causes. For unless I am much misinformed, there is still a progressive decrease by mortality in most of our Colonies; and if in a smaller ratio to their whole population than formerly, it is to be remembered that the enormous loss, in the seasoning of newly imported Africans, now no longer aggravates the sad account.

But though the evils which have been already enumerated are of no small amount, in estimating the physical sufferings of human beings, especially of the lower rank, yet, to a Christian eye, they shrink almost into insignificance when compared with the moral evils that remain behind — with that, above all, which runs through the whole of the various cruel circumstances of the Negro slave's condition,

and is at once the effect of his wrongs and sufferings, their bitter aggravation, and the pretext for their continuance,—his extreme degradation in the intellectual and moral scale of being, and in the estimation of his white oppressors.

The proofs of the extreme degradation of the slaves, in the latter sense, are innumerable; and, indeed, it must be confessed, that in the minds of Europeans in general, more especially in vulgar minds, whether vulgar from the want of education, or morally vulgar, (a more inwrought and less curable vulgarity,) the personal peculiarities of the Negro race could scarcely fail, by diminishing sympathy, to produce impressions, not merely of contempt, but even of disgust and aversion. But how strongly are these impressions sure to be confirmed and augmented, when to all the effects of bodily distinctions are superadded all those arising from the want of civilization and knowledge, and still more, all the hateful vices that slavery never fails to engender or to aggravate. Such, in truth, must naturally be the effect of these powerful causes, that even the most ingeniously constructed system which humanity and policy combined could have devised, would in vain have endeavoured to counteract them: how much more powerfully then must they operate, especially in low and uneducated minds, when the whole system abounds with institutions and practices

which tend to confirm and strengthen their efficiency, and to give to a contemptuous aversion for the Negro race, the sanction of manners and of law.

It were well if the consequences of these impressions were only to be discovered among the inferior ranks of the privileged class, or only to be found in the opinions and conduct of individuals. But in the earlier laws of our colonies they are expressed in the language of insult, and in characters of blood. And too many of these laws still remain unrepealed, to permit the belief that the same odious spirit of legislation no longer exists, or to relieve the injured objects of them from their degrading influence. The slaves were systematically depressed below the level of human beings.* And though I confess, that it is of less concern to a slave under what laws he lives than what is the character of his master, yet if the laws had extended to them favour and protection instead of degradation, this would have tended to raise them in the social scale, and operating insensibly on the public

* An act of Barbadoes, (8th Aug. 1688,) prescribing the mode of trial for slaves, recites, that "they being brutish slaves, deserve not, for the baseness of their condition, to be tried by the legal trial of twelve men of their peers, &c." Another clause of the same act, speaks of the "barbarous, wild, and savage natures of the same Negroes and other slaves," being such as renders them wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, practices, and customs of other nations." Other instances of a like spirit might be cited in the acts of other colonies.

mind, might, by degrees, have softened the extreme rigour of their bondage. Such, however, had been the contrary effects of an opposite process, on the estimation of the Negro race, before the ever-to-be-honored Granville Sharpe, and his followers, had begun to vindicate their claim to the character and privileges of human nature, that a writer of the highest authority on all West India subjects, Mr. Long, in his celebrated History of Jamaica, though pointing out some of the particulars of their ill treatment, scrupled not to state it as his opinion, that in the gradations of being, Negroes were little elevated above the oran outang, "that type of man." Nor was this an unguarded or a hastily thrown out assertion. He institutes a laborious comparison of the Negro race with that species of baboon; and declares, that "ludicrous as the opinion may seem, he does not think that an oran outang husband would be any dishonor to a Hottentot female." When we find such sentiments as these to have been unblushingly avowed by an author of the highest estimation among the West India colonists, we are prepared for what we find to have been, and, I grieve to say, still continues to be, the practical effects of these opinions.

The first particular of subsisting legal oppression that I shall notice, and which is at once a decisive proof of the degradation of the Negro race, in the eyes of the whites, and a powerful cause of its continuance, is of a deeply rooted cha-

racter, and often productive of the most cruel effects. In the contemplation of law they are not persons, but mere chattels ; and as such are liable to be seized and sold by creditors and by executors, in payment of their owner's debts ; and this separately from the estates on which they are settled. By the operation of this system, the most meritorious slave who may have accumulated a little peculium, and may be living with his family in some tolerable comfort, who by long and faithful services may have endeared himself to his proprietor or manager, — who, in short, is in circumstances that mitigate greatly the evils of his condition — is liable at once to be torn for ever from his home, his family, and his friends, and to be sent to serve a new master, perhaps in another island, for the rest of his life.

Another particular of their degradation by law, which, in its effects, most perniciously affects their whole civil condition, and of which their inadequate legal protection is a sure and necessary consequence, is their evidence being inadmissible against any free person. The effect of this cannot be stated more clearly or compendiously than in the memorable evidence of a gentleman eminently distinguished for the candour with which he gave to the Slave Trade Committee the result of his long personal experience in the West Indies, — the late Mr. Otley, Chief-justice of St. Vincent's, — himself a planter : — “ As the evidence of slaves is never

admitted against white men, the difficulty of legally establishing the facts is so great, that white men are in a manner put beyond the reach of the law." It is due also to the late Sir William Young, long one of the most active opponents of the abolition, to state, that he likewise, when Governor of Tobago, acknowledged, as a radical defect in the administration of justice, that the law of evidence "covered the most guilty European with impunity."

The same concession was made by both houses of the legislature of Grenada, in the earliest inquiries of the Privy Council. The only difficulty, as they stated, that had been found in putting an effectual stop to gross and wanton cruelty towards slaves, was that of bringing home the proof of the fact against the delinquent by satisfactory evidence; those who were capable of the guilt, being in general artful enough to prevent any but slaves being witnesses of the fact. "As the matter stands," they add, "though we hope the instances in this island are at this day not frequent, yet it must be admitted with regret, that the persons prosecuted, and who certainly were guilty, have escaped for want of legal proof."

It is obvious that the same cause must produce the same effect in all our other slave colonies, although there has not been found the same candour in confessing it.

The next evil which I shall specify, for which the extreme degradation of these poor beings,

in the eyes of their masters, can alone account; is the driving system. Not being supposed capable of being governed like other human beings, by the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment, they are subjected to the immediate impulse or present terror of the whip, and are driven at their work like brute animals. Lower than this it is scarcely possible for man to be depressed by man. If such treatment does not find him vile and despised, it must infallibly make him so. Let it not however be supposed, that the only evil of this truly odious system is its outraging the moral character of the human species, or its farther degrading the slaves in the eyes of all who are in authority over them, and thereby extinguishing that sympathy which would be their best protection. The whip is itself a dreadful instrument of punishment; and the mode of inflicting that punishment shockingly indecent and degrading. The drivers themselves, commonly, or rather always slaves, are usually the strongest and stoutest of the Negroes; and though they are forbidden to give more than a few lashes at a time, as the immediate chastisement of faults committed at their work, yet the power over the slaves which they thus possess unavoidably invests them with a truly formidable tyranny, the consequences of which, to the unfortunate subjects of it, are often in the highest degree oppressive and pernicious. No one who reflects on the subject can be at a loss to anticipate one odious use which is too

commonly made of this despotism, in extorting, from the fears of the young females who are subject to it, compliances with the licentious desires of the drivers, which they might otherwise have refused from attachment to another, if not from moral feelings and restraints. It is idle and insulting to talk of improving the condition of these poor beings, as rational and moral agents, while they are treated in a manner which precludes self-government, and annihilates all human motives but such as we impose on a maniac, or on a hardened and incorrigible convict.

Another abuse which shews, like the rest, the extreme degradation of the Negro race, and the apathy which it creates in their masters, is the cruel, and, at least in the case of the female sex, highly indecent punishments inflicted in public, and in the face of day, often in the presence of the gang, or of the whole assembled population of an estate. From their low and ignominious condition it doubtless proceeds, that they are in some degree regarded as below the necessity of observing towards others the proper decencies of life, or of having those decencies observed by others towards them.

It is no doubt also chiefly owing to their not being yet raised out of that extreme depth in which they are sunk, so much below the level of the human species, that no attempts have been made to introduce among them the

Christian institution of marriage, that blessed union which the Almighty himself established as a fundamental law, at the creation of man, to be as it were the well-spring of all the charities of life — the source of all domestic comfort and social improvement, — the moral cement of civilized society.

In truth, so far have the masters been from attempting to establish marriage generally among their slaves, that even the idea of its introduction among them never seems to have seriously suggested itself to their minds. In the commencement of the long contest concerning the abolition of the Slave Trade, it was one of a number of questions respecting the treatment of slaves in the West Indies put by the Privy Council, — “What is the practice respecting the marriage of Negro Slaves, and what are the regulations concerning it?” In all instances, and from every colony, the answers returned were such as these: “They do not marry.” “They cohabit by mutual consent,” &c. “If by marriage is meant a regular contract and union of one man with one woman, enforced by positive institutions, no such practice exists among the slaves, and they are left entirely free in this respect, &c.”

Let me not be supposed ignorant of some acts of the West Indian Legislatures, the perusal of which might produce an opposite impression on the uninformed and credulous

as they gravely require all owners, managers, &c. of slaves, under a penalty, to *exhort* their slaves to receive the ceremony of marriage as instituted under the forms of the Christian Religion: they even profess "*to protect the domestic and connubial happiness of slaves.*" But in direct contradiction to the impression that would naturally be produced by these laws, the Privy Council, but a year after their enactment, was informed, in express terms, that in the very island in which these laws had been passed, there was no such thing as marriage, except that sometimes it existed among the Roman Catholic slaves. This neglect of marriage is the more extraordinary, because the owners of slaves are powerfully called upon by self-interest, no less than by religion and humanity, to make the attempt to promote it. With one concurrent voice they have spoken of the licentiousness of the slaves, and of the numerous bad consequences which follow from the promiscuous intercourse so generally prevalent between the sexes. To this cause, indeed, they chiefly ascribed that inability to keep up the numbers of their slaves which they credibly professed to lament most deeply. How strange, then, that the very institution with which the Almighty associated the primeval command, "Increase and multiply," seems not even to have presented itself to their minds. I have scarcely found a solitary instance in which the want of marriage is regretted, or speci-

fied as in any degree instrumental in preventing the natural increase of slaves, which was desired so earnestly. I recollect not a word having been seriously stated on the subject, until long after the charge of neglecting the marriage institution had been strongly urged against the slave owners by the abolitionists. Then, indeed, it was stated in the meliorating act of the Leeward Islands of 1798, that it was unnecessary, and even improper, to enforce the celebration of any religious rites among the slaves, in order to sanctify contracts, the faithful performance of which could be looked for only by a regular improvement in religion, morality, and civilization. To those who know any thing of the public mind in our West Indian colonies, this passage speaks very intelligible language. It plainly intimates the very position I have been laying down, that the slaves are considered as too degraded to be proper subjects for the marriage institution. A striking corroboration of this position was afforded but a few years ago, when a very worthy clergyman, in one of our Leeward Islands, having obtained the master's leave, proposed to solemnize the marriage of a slave according to the forms of the Church of England. The publication of the banns produced an universal ferment in the colony: the case was immediately referred to the highest legal authorities upon the spot; nor was the question, as a point of law, settled, until it had been referred to his Majesty's legal advisers in this country.

I have dwelt the longer, and insisted the more strongly on the universal want of the marriage institution among the slaves, because, among the multiplied abuses of the West Indian system, it appears to me to be one of the most influential in its immoral and degrading effects. It should, however, be remarked, that though the prevalence of promiscuous intercourse between the male and female slaves is nearly universal, yet mutual and exclusive, though rarely permanent attachments between two individuals of different sexes frequently take place; and as the Africans notoriously have warm affections, the regard is often very strong, so long as it continues. On the mother's side also the instincts of nature are too sure not to produce great affection for her children, some degree of which also will often be found in the father. But how far are these precarious connections from producing that growing attachment, that mutual confidence, which spring from an identity of interest, from the common feeling for a common progeny, with all the multiplied emotions of hope and even of fear, of joys and even of sorrows, which bind families together, when mutually attached to each other by the indissoluble bonds of a Christian union? Alas! the injustice with which these poor creatures are treated accompanies them throughout the whole of their progress; and even the cordial drops which a gracious Providence has elsewhere poured into

the cup of poverty and labour, are to them vitiated and embittered.

It must also be observed, that licentiousness thus produced is not confined to the Negroes. The fact is perfectly notorious, that it has been the general policy to employ instead of married managers and overseers, single young men as the immediate superintendents of the gangs; and hence it too naturally follows, that they who, from their being the depositories of the master's authority, ought to be the protectors of the purity of the young females, too often become their corrupters.

It is a farther important truth, pregnant with the most serious consequences, that the extreme degradation which is supposed to render the slaves unfit to form the marriage contract, belongs not merely to their situation as slaves, but to their colour as Negroes. Hence it adheres not only to those who are for ever released from slavery, but to those also who, by having one European parent, might be presumed to be raised highly above the level of the servile race. Such is the incurable infamy inherent in what still belongs to them of African origin, that they are at an almost immeasurable distance in the scale of being below the lowest of the whites.* The free women of colour deem an

* The extreme degradation of the coloured race, as it affects their marriage relations, is strikingly illustrated by a passage in one of the many pamphlets published

illicit connection with a white man more respectable than a legal union with a coloured husband ; while the Mulatto males, as Mr. B. Edwards de-

against the Registry Bill, in 1816, by a gentleman some time resident in Barbadoes. He speaks with real humanity of the free coloured people, and strongly recommends their being invested with civil and political rights. Such is the uncommon enlargement of his mind, that he even suggests a plan, through the medium of a moral union of the sects among the coloured people in the colonies, for the gradual emancipation of the slaves ; yet he very strongly deprecates any attempt to introduce any such connection between them and the white inhabitants : and he owns that the West Indian prejudice is sufficiently implanted in his own mind, to render such a connection not only repugnant to his feelings, but "contrary to his idea of morals, religion, and policy." Observe here, that this West Indian prejudice is only against a *moral* union and connection, for he actually informs us that the *immoral* connection with this degraded class of the female population is almost universal, prevailing, with scarcely an exception, among the married no less than the unmarried men. He states, and it is abundantly confirmed by Mr. Edwards, that prostitution is unhappily now the only portion of the coloured women ; and that the white men who form connections with them, purchase them of their owners, and in many instances of their own parents. But against the *moral* union he declares that he would guard, by advising that the law should be made to attach the *heaviest pains and penalties of a felonious act* upon the parties so intermarrying. The opinion of a single individual, however respectable, would scarcely have sufficient weight to entitle it to so much notice in any general argument concerning the treatment of the Negroes ; but it becomes of real importance, when, as in this instance, the advocate for the West Indian cause bears his testimony to the generally prevailing sentiments and practices in one of the largest and most ancient of our West Indian colonies.

clares with great feeling, are unhappily in too low a state of degradation to think of matrimony. Well may he then remark, that their spirits seem to sink under the consciousness of their condition.* Thus a fatal looseness of principle and practice diffuses itself throughout the whole community. A licentious intercourse between the white men and the coloured females was confessed by Mr. Long to be general in his day; and Mr. B. Edwards, whose History was published so recently as 1798, while he expresses himself with great pity for the wretched victims of this dissoluteness, acknowledges that the general morals were then little, if at all improved, in this particular.

Nor let this be deemed a consideration of subordinate importance. A most sagacious observer of human nature, the late Dr. Paley, states, "It is a fact, however it be accounted for," that "the criminal commerce of the sexes corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever." "These indulgences," he adds, "in low life, are usually the first stage in mens' progress to the most desperate villanies; and in high life, to that lamented dissoluteness of principle which manifests itself in a profligacy of public con-

* Can I forbear adding, that Mr. Edwards states, that to the Negroes, these poor degraded Mulattoes are objects of envy and hatred, for the supposed superiority of their condition? How low then must the former be sunk in the scale of being!

duct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity." This cannot be surprising to any considerate mind. The Supreme Ordainer of all things, in his moral administration of the universe, usually renders crime, in the way of natural consequences, productive of punishment; and it surely was to be expected that he would manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of practices which are at war with the marriage institution, — the great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind.

In my estimate of things, however, and I trust in that of the bulk of my countrymen, though many of the physical evils of our colonial slavery are cruel, and odious, and pernicious, the almost universal destitution of religious and moral instruction among the slaves is the most serious of all the vices of the West Indian system; and had there been no other, this alone would have most powerfully enforced on my conscience the obligation of publicly declaring my decided conviction, that it is the duty of the legislature of this country to interpose for the mitigation and future termination of a state in which the ruin of the moral man, if I may so express myself, has been one of the sad consequences of his bondage.

It cannot be denied, I repeat, that the slaves, more especially the great body of the field Negroes, are practically strangers to the multiplied blessings of the Christian Revelation.

What a consideration is this! A nation, which besides the invaluable benefit of an unequalled degree of true civil liberty, has been favoured with an unprecedented measure of religious light, with its long train of attendant blessings, has been for two centuries detaining in a state of slavery, beyond example rigorous, and in some particulars worse than pagan darkness and depravity, hundreds of thousands of their fellow creatures, originally torn from their native land by fraud and violence. Generation after generation have thus been pining away; and in this same condition of ignorance and degradation they still, for the most part, remain. This I am well aware is an awful charge; but it undeniably is too well founded, and scarcely admits of any exception beyond what has been effected by those excellent, though too commonly traduced and persecuted men, the Christian missionaries. They have done all that it has been possible for them to do; and through the divine blessing they have indeed done much, especially in the towns, and among the household slaves, considering the many and great obstacles with which they have had to contend.

I must not be supposed ignorant that of late years various colonial laws have been passed, professedly with a view to the promoting of religion among the slaves: but they are all, I fear, worse than nullities. In truth, the solicitude which they express for the personal protection, and still more for the moral interests,

of the slaves, contrasted with the apparent forgetfulness of those interests which so generally follows in the same community, might have appeared inexplicable, but for the frank declaration of the Governor of one of the West Indian islands, which stood among the foremost in passing one of these boasted laws for ameliorating the condition of the slaves. That law contained clauses which, with all due solemnity, and with penalties for the non-observance of its injunctions, prescribed the religious instruction of the slaves; and the promoting of the marriage institution among them; and in order "to secure as far as possible the good treatment of the slaves, and to ascertain the cause of their decrease, if any," it required certificates of the slaves' increase and decrease to be annually delivered on oath, under a penalty of 50*l*. currency. His Majesty's government, some time after, very meritoriously wishing for information as to the state of the slaves, applied to the governor for some of the intelligence which this act was to provide. To this application the Governor, the late Sir George Prevost, replied as follows: "The act of the legislature, entitled 'An act for the encouragement, protection, and better government of slaves,' appears to have been considered, from the day it was passed until this hour, as a political measure to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of slaves." The same account of the motives by which the legislatures of other West Indian

islands were induced to pass acts for ameliorating the condition of the slaves, was given by several of the witnesses who were examined in the committee of the House of Commons in 1790 and 1791.

In all that I state concerning the religious interests of the slaves, as well as in every other instance, I must be understood to speak only of the *general* practice. There are, I know, resident in this country, individual owners of slaves, and some, as I believe, even in the colonies, who have been sincerely desirous that their slaves should enjoy the blessings of Christianity: though, often, I lament to say, where they have desired it, their pious endeavours have been of little or no avail. So hard is it, especially for absent proprietors, to stem the tide of popular feeling and practice, which sets strongly in every colony against the religious instruction of slaves. So hard also, I must add, is it to reconcile the necessary means of such instruction with the harsh duties and harsher discipline to which these poor beings are subjected. The gift even of the rest of the Sabbath is more than the established oeconomics of a sugar plantation permit even the most independent planter to confer, while the law tacitly sanctions its being wholly withheld from them.

Generally speaking, throughout the whole of our West Indian islands, the field slaves, or common labourers, instead of being encouraged or even permitted to devote the Sunday to reli-

gious purposes, are employed either in working their provision-grounds for their own and their families' subsistence, or are attending, often carrying heavy loads to, the Sunday markets, which frequently, in Jamaica, are from ten to fifteen miles distant from their abodes.

These abuses confessedly continue to prevail in despite of the urgent remonstrances, for more than the last half century, of members of the colonial body, and these sometimes, like Mr. B. Edwards, the most accredited advocates for the interests and character of the West Indians.

The insensibility of the planters, even to the temporal good effects of Christianity on their slaves, is the more surprising, because, besides their having been powerfully enforced by self-interest, as I have already stated, in restraining a licentious intercourse between the sexes, they were strongly recommended, especially in the great island of Jamaica, by another consideration of a very peculiar nature. The Jamaica planters long imputed the most injurious effects on the health and even the lives of their slaves, to the African practice of Obeah, or witchcraft. The agents for Jamaica declared to the privy council, in 1788, that they "ascribed a very considerable portion of the annual mortality among the Negroes in that island to that fascinating mischief." I know that of late, ashamed of being supposed to have punished witchcraft with such severity, it has been alleged, that the professors of Obeah used to prepare and

administer poison to the subjects of their spells : but any one who will only examine the laws of Jamaica against these practices, or read the evidence of the agents, will see plainly that this was not the view that was taken of the proceedings of the Obeah-men, but that they were considered as impostors, who preyed on their ignorant countrymen by a pretended intercourse with evil spirits, or by some other pretences to supernatural powers. The idea of rooting out any form of pagan superstition by severity of punishment, especially in wholly uninstructed minds, like that of extirpating Christianity by the fire and the faggot, has long been exploded among the well-informed ; and it has even been established, that the devilish engine of persecution recoils back on its employers, and disseminates the very principles it would suppress. Surely then it might have been expected, that, if from no other motive, yet that for the purpose of rooting a pagan superstition out of the minds of the slaves, the aid of Christianity would have been called in, as the safest species of knowledge ? and it was strange if the Jamaica gentlemen were ignorant of the indubitable fact, that Christianity never failed to chase away these vain terrors of darkness and paganism. No sooner did a Negro become a Christian, than the Obeah-man despaired of bringing him into subjection. And it is well worthy of remark, that when in the outset of our abolition proceedings, His Majesty's Privy Council, among a

number of queries sent out to the different West India islands, concerning the condition of the slaves, had proposed several concerning the nature and effects of this African superstition, of which the Privy Council had heard so much from the agents for Jamaica, the Council and Assembly of the Island of Antigua, in which, through the successful labours of the Moravian and Methodist missionaries, great numbers of the slaves had become Christians, resented, as an imputation on their understandings, the very idea of their being supposed to have considered the practices of the Obeah-men as deserving of any serious attention. Surely then we might have expected that regard for the temporal well-being of the slaves, if not for their highest interests, would have prompted their owners to endeavour to bring them out of their present state of religious darkness into the blessed light of Christianity? But even self-interest itself appears to lose its influence, when it is to be promoted by means of introducing Christianity among the slaves.

If any thing were wanting to add the last finishing tint to the dark colouring of this gloomy picture, it would be afforded by a consideration which still remains behind. However humiliating the statement must be to that legislature which exercises its superintendency over every part of the British Empire; it is nevertheless true, that, low in point of morals as the Africans may have been in their own

country, their descendants, who have never seen the continent of Africa, but who are sprung from those who for several successive generations have been resident in the Christian colonies of Great Britain, are still lower. Nay, they are universally represented as remarkable in those colonies for vices which are directly opposite to the character which has been given of the Africans by several of the most intelligent travellers who have visited the interior of their native country. In proof of this assertion, I refer not to any delineations of the African character by what might be supposed to be partial hands. Let any one peruse the writings of authors who opposed the abolition of the Slave Trade, more especially the Travels of Mr. Parke and M. Golberry, both published since the commencement of the Slave Trade contest. It is not unworthy of remark, that many of the Africans in their own country are raised, by not being altogether illiterate, far above the low level to which the entire want of all education depresses the field slaves in the West Indies. It is stated by Mr. Parke, who took his passage from Africa to the West Indies in a slave-ship, that of one hundred and thirty slaves which the vessel conveyed, about twenty-five of them, who, as he supposes, had been of free condition, could most of them write a little Arabic. The want, however, of this measure of literature is of small account : but compare the moral nature of the Africans, while yet living in their

native land, and in all the darkness and abominations of paganism, with the character universally given of the same Africans in our West Indian colonies. He will find that the Negroes, who while yet in Africa were represented to be industrious, generous, eminent for truth, seldom chargeable with licentiousness, distinguished for their domestic affections, and capable at times of acts of heroic magnanimity, are described as being in the West Indies the very opposite in all particulars; selfish, indolent, deceitful, ungrateful, —and above all, in whatever respects the intercourse between the sexes, incurably licentious.

And now, without a farther or more particular delineation of the slavery of the British colonies, what a system do we behold!! Is it too much to affirm, that there never was, certainly never before in a Christian country, a mass of such aggravated enormities?

That such a system should so long have been suffered to exist in any part of the British Empire will appear, to our posterity, almost incredible. It had, indeed, been less surprising, if its seat had been in regions, like those of Hindostan, for instance, where a vast population had come into our hands in all the full-blown enormity of heathen institutions; where the bloody superstitions, and the unnatural cruelties and immoralities of paganism, had established themselves in entire authority, and had produced their natural effects in the depravity and moral degradation of the spe-

cies; though even in such a case as that, our excuse would hold good no longer than for the period which might be necessary for reforming the native abuses by those mild and reasonable means which alone are acknowledged to be just in principle, or practically effectual to their purpose. But that in communities formed from their very origin by a Christian people, and in colonies containing no Pagan inhabitants but those whom we ourselves have compulsorily brought into it, — inhabitants too, who, from all the circumstances of their case, had the strongest possible claims on us, both for the reparation of their wrongs, and the relief of their miseries, — such a system should have been continued for two centuries, and by a people who may, nevertheless, I trust, be affirmed to be the most moral and humane of nations, is one of those anomalies which, if it does not stagger the belief, will, at least, excite the astonishment of future ages.

But it may naturally and perhaps not unfairly be asked of the abolitionists — You professed to be well acquainted with the state of things in the West Indies when you moved for the abolition of the Slave Trade — if you then thought the system to be at all such as you now state it to be, how could you rest contented with restricting your efforts to the abolition of the traffic in slaves, contrary, as you confess, to the wishes and even the endeavours of many friends of your great cause, and of some even of its enemies?

It is true, that the evils of the West Indian

system had not passed unnoticed ; and we would gladly have brought forward a plan for ameliorating the condition of the Negroes, but that the effort was beyond our strength. We found the adversaries of the abolition far too numerous and too powerful for us, and we were perfectly sure that we should greatly add to their number and vehemence by striking also at the system of slavery. But farther I will frankly confess, that we greatly deceived ourselves by expecting much more benefit to the plantation Negroes from the abolition of the Slave Trade than has actually resulted from that measure. We always relied much on its efficiency in preparing the way for a general emancipation of the slaves : for let it be remembered, that, from the very first, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Grey, and all the rest of the earliest abolitionists, declared that the extinction of slavery was our great and ultimate object ; and we trusted, that by compelling the planters to depend wholly on native increase for the supply of their gangs, they would be forced to improve the condition of their slaves, to increase their food, to lessen their labour, to introduce task-work, to abolish the driving system, together with degrading and indecent punishments, to attach the slaves to the soil, and, with proper qualifications, to admit their testimony as witnesses — a necessary step to all protection by law ; above all, to attend to their religious and moral improvement, and to one of the grand

peculiarities of Christianity, the marriage institution. By the salutary operation of these various improvements, the slaves would have become qualified for the enjoyment of liberty ; and preparation would have been made for that happy day, when the yoke should be taken off for ever, when the blessed transmutation should take place of a degraded slave population into a free and industrious peasantry.*

* It is the more necessary to state that the views of the abolitionists were always directed towards the extinction of slavery, after preparing the black population for the enjoyment of it ; because, from some statements which were made in the Register-bill controversy, we may expect that our opponents will renew the charge they then brought against us, that we had originally disclaimed all views of emancipating the slaves actually in the islands, confining ourselves exclusively to the prohibition of all future importations of Negroes. Our explanation is clear and short. Our opponents imputed to us that our real intention was, *immediately*, to emancipate the slave population of the Colonies : they were aware that there were many who felt themselves bound by the most urgent principles of justice and humanity at once to put an end to a system of crimes, which was so falsely called a trade in Negroes, who yet would oppose all endeavours to emancipate the slaves without those previous and preparatory measures that would be requisite for enabling them to render the acquisition of liberty either safe for their owners or beneficial to themselves. We, in consequence, declared, that although we certainly did look forward ultimately to the emancipation of the slaves, yet that the object we were then pursuing was only the abolition of the Slave Trade, of which it was one grand recommendation, that by stopping the further influx of uncivilised Africans, and by rendering the planters sensible that they must in future depend on the native increase for

We were too sanguine in our hopes as to the effects of the abolition in our colonies ; we judged too favourably of human nature ; we thought too well of the colonial assemblies ; we did not allow weight enough to the effects of rooted prejudice and inveterate habits — to absenteeism, a vice which, taken in its whole extent, is perhaps one of the most injurious of the whole system ; to the distressed finances of the planters ; and, above all, to the effects of the extreme degradation of the Negro slaves, and to the long and entire neglect of Christianity among them, with all its attendant blessings.

True it is, that from the want of effectual Register acts, the experiment has not been fairly tried ; as the abolition is in consequence known to be a law that may easily be evaded. For,

keeping up their slave population, it would tend powerfully to prepare the way for the great and happy change of slave into free labourers. Our adversaries, however, continuing artfully to confound abolition and emancipation, our efforts were often employed in distinguishing between the two, and in distinctly and fully explaining our real meaning ; nor am I conscious of any occasion, on which we disclaimed the intention of emancipation, without accompanying the disclaimer with the clear explanation that it was immediate, not ultimate emancipation, which we disclaimed. Not to mention declarations without number of our real meaning, various illustrations might be referred to of the chief speakers in those debates, which would prove that the emancipation of the slaves was the ultimate, though not the immediate object, of all those who took the lead as advocates for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

let it be ever borne in mind, that the ground of our persuasion was, that the absolute prohibition of all future importation of slaves into the colonies, provided means were adopted for insuring its permanent execution, would exercise a sort of moral compulsion over the minds of the planters, and even of their managers and overseers, and induce them, for the necessary end of maintaining the black population, to adopt effectual measures for reforming the principal abuses of the system : but it is manifest, that such compulsion could not arise from a law which they had power to elude at pleasure. I am willing, however, for my own part, to admit that this foundation-stone of our hopes may have rested on sandy ground ; for what has since passed has proved to me how little prudence and foresight can effect in opposition to the stubborn prejudices, and strong passions, and inveterate habits that prevail in our West Indian assemblies. With one single exception in favour of the free coloured people in Jamaica, the admission of their evidence, which, however, only placed them in the situation which they had always before occupied in most of our other islands, I know not any vice of the system that has been rooted out, any material improvement that has been adopted. Not only the abuses which had been pointed out by the abolitionists are still existing in all their original force, but some of those reforms which had been urged on the colonial legisla-

tures by their warmest friends, and most approved advocates, remain to this hour unadopted in every island. Mr. B. Edwards, for instance, near thirty years ago, in his History of the West Indies, recommended the introduction, wherever practicable, of the system of task-work, accompanied of course with a law for securing to the slave his little peculium. He recommended also, though with less confidence, a plan for instituting among the slaves a sort of juries for the trial of petty offences—a measure which, he added, he had heard had been tried successfully in two instances in Jamaica, and which a humane proprietor of Barbadoes, the late Mr. Steele, introduced, and for many years maintained with great advantage on his own estate. Another measure, which, as he truly stated, was of less doubtful efficacy, was strongly enforced by him; namely, the duty of rendering the Sabbath a day of rest and religious improvement, by suppressing the Sunday markets, which he justly declared to be a disgrace to a Christian country. But above all the rest, he pressed the reform of what he represented the greatest of all the Negro's grievances, and which he afterwards brought to the notice of the British Parliament. This was the liability of the slaves to be sold by creditors, under executions for the payment of debts. This grievance he alleged to be upheld and confirmed, though not originally created, by a British Act of Parliament, 5 Geo. 2. cap. 7., which, he contended, it was necessary to repeal, in order to

enable the colonial legislatures to do away with the practice altogether. He declared it to be a grievance, remorseless and tyrannical in its principle, and dreadful in its effects; a grievance too, which it could not be urged occurred but seldom. "Unhappily," he added, "it occurs every day; and, under the present system, will continue to occur, so long as men shall continue to be unfortunate. Let this statute then," said he, "be totally repealed. *Let the Negroes be attached to the land, and sold with it.*" He even arraigned the abolitionists as eminently criminal for not having solicited the repeal of that "execrable statute," as he termed it, though of its operation and even existence nineteen-twentieths of them perhaps were utterly ignorant. With no little pomp and circumstance did this gentleman introduce and carry through Parliament, an act for repealing the statute complained of; and he had the cordial and unanimous support of all the abolitionists. This measure seemed to pledge the assemblies in the most effectual manner to follow up the principle of the repealing act, by repealing also their own laws which supported, and had, in fact, first introduced the cruel practice: and this experiment on their humanity was tried, it must be admitted, under the most favourable circumstances; for Mr. B. Edwards's proposal of attaching the slaves to the land was strongly recommended to their adoption by the Duke of Portland, then secretary of state for the colonies, a nobleman well known to be

peculiarly acceptable to them, in a circular letter to the Governor. Yet of all our colonial legislatures, then thirteen in number, not one has in any degree reformed the grievance in question, much less, followed the suggestion of Mr. Edwards, by attaching the slaves to the plantations. The House of Assembly of Jamaica contemptuously declined giving any answer at all to the Governor's message upon the subject; and the slaves are still everywhere subject to that "*remorseless and tyrannical grievance*," which above three-and-twenty years ago was so feelingly denounced to, and condemned by, the British Parliament.

Other mitigations of slavery have as long been recommended to the assemblies, even by their own most respected advocates in this country; but not one has been effectually adopted. The laws which the various legislatures have passed for such purposes, still precisely answer the description given by Mr. Burke in his letter to Mr. Secretary Dundas, in 1792, of such colonial statutes: "I have seen," said he, after the passing of the celebrated consolidated Slave Laws of Jamaica, and of other islands, "I have seen what has been done by the West Indian Assemblies. It is arrant trifling; — they have done little, and what they have done is *good for nothing, for it is totally destitute of an executory principle*." Taking into consideration all the circumstances that accompanied and followed the enactment

of those laws, it is difficult to suppose that they were not passed on the views stated in the memorable letter before noticed of the Governor of Dominica, and which, indeed, seemed to have been virtually recommended to them in the year 1797 by the West Indian committee; as the objects suggested to them by that body were "the joint purposes of opposing the plan of the abolitionists *," (*i. e.* the abolition of the Slave Trade,) "and establishing the character of the West Indian body." One grand class of such laws, passed, indeed, at a considerably later period, — the acts of the colonial assemblies for registering the slaves, with a view to prevent illicit importation, — are shown, by a report of the African Institution, to be wholly and manifestly ineffectual to their purpose. But the case, in several of the islands, is still more opprobrious; new laws have been passed, which so far from even exhibiting any show of a wish to alleviate the pressure of the yoke of slavery, have rendered it more dreadfully galling, and less tolerable, because even more than before hopeless. The individual manumission of slaves by their masters, which has been provided for, with so much sound policy as well as true humanity, by the laws in force in the Spanish colonies, and has there been found productive of such happy effects; those individual manumissions which,

* It is, in the original, "the plan of Mr. Wilberforce." See papers of 1804. St. Vincent's, I. 7.

while slavery prevailed here, the English law assiduously encouraged and promoted, have been cruelly restrained. They were long since, in one or two of our islands, subjected to discouraging regulations ; but were, in most of our colonies, wholly unrestrained till within the last thirty years. Can it be conceived possible, that even since the mitigation of slavery was recommended from the throne, in consequence of addresses from Parliament, several of the colonial legislatures have for the first time imposed, and others have greatly augmented, the fines to be paid into their treasuries on the enfranchising of slaves, so that in some colonies they amount nearly to an entire prohibition ? Such acts may be truly said to be more unjust in their principle, and more cruel and dangerous in their effects, than almost any other part of the dreadful code of West Indian legislation. The laws of England, ever favourable to manumissions, progressively rooted out the curse of slavery from our native land ; but it is the opposite and opprobrious tendency of these colonial laws to make the barbarous institution perpetual.

I press these topics the more earnestly, because there has prevailed among many of our statesmen, of late years, a most unwarrantable and pernicious disposition to leave all that concerns the well-being of the slaves to the colonial legislatures. Surely this is a course manifestly contrary to the clearest obligations of duty. The very relation in which the Negro slaves and

the members of the colonial assemblies, which consist wholly of their masters, stand towards each other, is of itself a decisive reason why the imperial legislature ought to consider itself bound to exercise the office of an umpire, or rather of a judge between them, as constituting two parties of conflicting interests and feelings. And this, let it be remembered, not merely because, knowing the frailty of our common nature, and its disposition to abuse absolute power, we ought not to deliver the weaker party altogether into the power of the stronger; but because in the present instance there are peculiar objections of great force, some of which have been already noticed. In truth, West Indians must be exempt from the ordinary frailties of human nature, if, living continually with those wretched beings, and witnessing their extreme degradation and consequent depravity, they could entertain for the Negroes, in an unimpaired degree, that equitable consideration and that fellow-feeling, which are due from man to man; so as to sympathise properly with them in their sufferings and wrongs, or form a just estimate of their claims to personal rights and moral improvement.

The fact is, that though the old prejudice, that the Negroes are creatures of an inferior nature, is no longer maintained in terms, there is yet too much reason to fear that a latent impression arising from it still continues practically to operate in the colonies, and to in-

fluence the minds of those who have the government of the slaves, in estimating their physical claims, and still more those of their moral nature. The colonists, indeed, and the abolitionists, would differ as to facts, in speaking of the sufficiency of the slave's supply of food, and of his treatment in some other particulars. But on what other principle than that of the inferiority of the species, can it be explained, that, in estimating what is due to the Negroes, all consideration of their moral nature has been altogether left out? When it is undeniable that they have no more power of giving their testimony against any white ruffian by whom they may have been maltreated, than if they were of the brute creation; that they are worked like cattle under the whip; that they are strangers to the institution of marriage, and to all the blessed truths of Christianity; how, but from their supposed inferiority of nature, could we nevertheless be assured by the colonial legislatures, with the most unhesitating confidence, that whatever defects there might formerly have been in their treatment, they are now as well used *as can reasonably be desired*? If such be indeed their opinion, whether that opinion proceeds from the views here intimated or not, it would still suffice to show the criminality, of our committing to them the destiny of the slaves. For let it be observed, there is not in this instance any difference as to the facts of the case; nor do the colonists affirm what we deny, as to the moral

degradation of the slaves. Both parties, for instance, agree that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, and Pagan darkness, are nearly universal among them; and yet the colonists contend that the slaves are as well treated and governed as they need to be. Can then the members of the British Parliament conscientiously devolve the duty of establishing such religious and moral reforms, as I trust it must be the universal wish of every member of the empire to introduce among the Negroes, upon those, who, to say nothing of the extremity of personal degradation, consider marriage and Christianity as unworthy of their regard, in estimating the condition of their fellow creatures?

Indeed, the West Indians, in the warmth of argument, have gone still farther, and have even distinctly told us, again and again, and I am shocked to say that some of their partizans in this country have re-echoed the assertion, that these poor degraded beings, the Negro slaves, are as well or even better off than our British peasantry, — a proposition so monstrous, that nothing can possibly exhibit in a stronger light the extreme force of the prejudices which must exist in the minds of its assertors. A Briton to compare the state of a West Indian slave with that of an English freeman, and to give the former the preference! It is to imply an utter insensibility of the native feelings and moral dignity of man, no less than of the rights of Englishmen!! I will not condescend to argue this ques-

tion, as I might, on the ground of comparative feeding and clothing, and lodging, and medical attendance. Are these the only claims? are these the chief privileges of a rational and immortal being? Is the consciousness of personal independence nothing? are self-possession and self-government nothing? Is it of no account that our persons are inviolate by any private authority, and that the whip is placed only in the hands of the public executioner; Is it of no value that we have the power of pursuing the occupation and the habits of life which we prefer; that we have the prospect, or at least the hope, of improving our condition, and of rising, as we have seen others rise, from poverty and obscurity to comfort, and opulence, and distinction? Again, are all the charities of the heart, which arise out of the domestic relations, to be considered as nothing; and, I may add, all their security too among men who are free agents, and not vendible chattels, liable continually to be torn from their dearest connections, and sent into a perpetual exile? Are husband and wife, parent and child, terms of no meaning? Are willing services, or grateful returns for voluntary kindnesses, nothing? But, above all, is Christianity so little esteemed among us, that we are to account as of no value the hope, "full of immortality," the light of heavenly truth, and all the consolations and supports by which religion cheers the hearts and elevates the principles, and dignifies the conduct of multitudes of our labouring classes in this

free and enlightened country? Is it nothing to be taught that all human distinctions will soon be at an end; that all the labours and sorrows of poverty and hardship will soon exist no more; and to know, on the express authority of Scripture, that the lower classes, instead of being an inferior order in the creation, are even the preferable objects of the love of the Almighty?

But such wretched sophisms as insult the understandings of mankind, are sometimes best answered by an appeal to their feelings. Let me therefore ask, is there, in the whole of the three kingdoms, a parent or a husband so sordid and insensible that any sum, which the richest West Indian proprietor could offer him, would be deemed a compensation for his suffering his wife or his daughter to be subjected to the brutal outrage of the cart-whip—to the savage lust of the driver—to the indecent, and degrading, and merciless punishment of a West Indian whipping? If there were one so dead, I say not to every liberal, but to every natural feeling, as that money could purchase of him such concessions, such a wretch, and he alone, would be capable of the farther sacrifices necessary for degrading an English peasant to the condition of a West Indian slave. He might consent to sell the liberty of his own children, and to barter away even the blessings conferred on himself by that religion which declares to him that his master, no less than himself, has a Master in heaven—a common Creator, who is no re-

specter of persons, and in whose presence he may weekly stand on the same spiritual level with his superiors in rank, to be reminded of their common origin, common responsibility, and common day of final and irreversible account.

But I will push no farther a comparison which it is painful and humiliating to contemplate : let it however be remembered, that it is to those who have professed insensibility to this odious contrast that the destiny of the poor slaves would be committed, were we to leave them to the disposal of the colonial legislatures.

There is another consideration, which, on a moment's reflection, will appear perhaps not less decisive. The advocates for the Negroes declare without reserve, as from the first they declared, that the reforms they wish to introduce are intended, by preparing the slaves for the possession of self-government, for the purpose of gradually and safely doing away slavery altogether, and transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition of free British labourers. Now, let it never be forgotten, the West Indian legislatures, and almost all the colonists, with one concurrent voice, declare that the emancipation of the slaves, within any period except that to which an antediluvian might have looked forward, would be their utter ruin. Shall we then devolve the duty of introducing into the West Indian system the moral reforms which, once effected, would render it

manifestly impossible to detain the slave in his present degrading bondage, on those who plainly tell us that his being delivered from it would be productive of their utter ruin? Can *they* be expected to labour fairly in producing reforms, the ultimate object of which they do not merely regard as superfluous, but dread as most pernicious and destructive? Should we act thus in any parallel instance? All comparisons on this subject are weak; but suppose that, through a criminal inadvertency, we had administered some poisonous substance to a fellow creature, who had a special claim to our protection and kindness; that we had deeply injured his constitution, and that the comfort of all his future life, or probably his life itself, should depend on his being immediately put under a course of the ablest medical treatment. Supposing also—surely in such a case no unnatural supposition—that we felt the deepest distress of mind from the consciousness of the wrong we had done to this poor sufferer, and were prompted, alike by conscience and feeling, to use our utmost possible endeavours to restore him to ease and health—should we be satisfied with committing this patient into the hands of some medical practitioner, whom otherwise we might have been disposed to employ, if he were to state to us, contrary to our plain knowledge of the fact, “The man has taken no poison—his health has sustained no injury—he is already as sound and well as he needs to be, and requires no farther medical care.” But we

may put the case still more strongly:—Supposing there were a declared opposition of interest between the patient and this same medical practitioner, and that the latter conceived that the recovery of the patient would prove fatal to his own future fortunes—could we then, as honest and rational men, commit the case to his uncontrouled management alone? If we did, who would not pronounce our alleged sorrow for the injury we had done, and our earnest wish to repair it, to be no better than hypocritical affectation.

Let me not be conceived to dwell on this topic with unreasonable pertinacity. In truth, practically speaking, the fate of the Negro slaves, so far at least as a safe and peaceable reform of the system is in question, hinges entirely on this point. Of this the colonists themselves are well aware; and, wise in their generation, they therefore take their principal stand on the ground of objecting to the interference of the imperial legislature for the protection of the slaves, though this is an objection which did not even so much as present itself to the inquiring mind of Mr. Burke, when in the year 1780 he drew up his plan for the reformation of the Negro system; or in 1792, when he communicated it to his majesty's ministers. For we cannot suppose that had it suggested itself to his mind, as an obstacle to the introduction of his plan, he would have left it quite unnoticed. Few, if any, are bold enough to claim for the assemblies an ex-

clusive jurisdiction on these subjects as their right. They only tell us of the *delicacy* of Parliamentary interference in such matters of internal legislation. This delicacy, however, was not felt, I repeat it, by Mr. Burke. As little was it felt by Mr. Dundas, the avowed advocate of the Colonies, when, in 1792, he brought forward his plan of emancipation. We may therefore certainly conclude, that no such objection occurred to that experienced statesman, who, as a minister of the crown, was called on for great circumspection, especially in regard to measures proposed by himself; but who, like Mr. Burke, never condescended to notice any such objection to the plan which he laid before the House of Commons.

To persons not conversant with the state of things in the West Indies, it may appear plausible to say, that the assemblies and their constituents are the most competent, in point of information, to the important work of reform; and many are apt, perhaps, to be misled by a supposed analogy between the relations of master and slave in the West Indies, and those of the owner or occupier of land and his labourers in this country. But there is in fact no just analogy between them; nor are the colonial legislatures composed of such men as the West Indian proprietors whom we are accustomed to see in this country; many of whom are personally strangers to their estates, and to the crimes and miseries of the system by which they

are governed. Nor is the moral state of the whites resident in the West Indies, less different from that of the corresponding classes of our countrymen in their native land. It has been most truly remarked by Mr. Brougham, in his able work on colonial policy, that the agriculture of the West Indies has always been of a nature nearly allied to commercial adventure; and the spirit of adventure, as he justly observes, is, in such circumstances, unfavourable to morals and to manners. Mr. B. means of course, as the context shews, not such commercial enterprise as belongs to the mercantile character in its proper element, but that of which man is the subject, in the gaming agricultural speculations of a sugar colony. He means, that it gives none of the proper virtues of the industrious European merchant, and still less of those steady local attachments which belong to the landed proprietor here, and make him the natural patron of the labouring class, settled on his hereditary property. "The object of a West India resident speculator," he observes, "is not to live, but to gain; not to enjoy, but to save; not to subsist in the colonies, but to prepare for shining in the mother country." This I am well aware will be an offensive, as I am sure it is to me a painful topic; but it ought not on that account to be left out of view; and any one who wishes to form a just notion of the effects of these causes will find them stated in the work above-mentioned, with the accustomed force of that very

powerful writer.* Even in the French islands, where there have been always far more resident proprietors than in our own, the same causes are stated by Mr. Malonet, himself a colonist, to operate powerfully, and to produce in a considerable degree similar bad effects.

And is it to societies consisting of such elements as these, that a humane and enlightened legislature can conscientiously delegate its duties

* Mr. Brougham must be understood to intend to state only the tendency and general effects of the causes he has been enumerating. When individuals manifest that they are exceptions to the rule, it is so much the more to their honour. "A colony," he remarks, "composed of such adventurers, is peopled by a race of men all hastening to grow rich, and eager to acquire wealth for the gratification of avarice or voluptuousness." "The continuance of the members in this society is as short as possible." "What," they may be supposed to say to themselves, "what, though our conduct is incorrect, and our manners dissolute? We shall accommodate them to those of our European countrymen when we return." "Such I fear is the natural language of men in those circumstances. But their manners are affected also by other peculiarities in their situation. The want of modest female society, the general case on the plantations remote from the towns, while it brutalizes the mind and manners of men, necessarily deprives them of all the virtuous pleasures of domestic life, and frees them from those restraints which the presence of a family always imposes on the conduct of the most profligate men. The witnesses of the planters' actions are the companions of his debaucheries, or the wretched beings who tremble at his nod, while they minister to the indulgence of his brutal appetite; and impose no more check upon his excesses than if they wanted that faculty of speech which almost alone distinguishes them from the beasts that surround them."

as to religious and moral reforms ; reforms too, as has been already shewn, which the colonists not only slight as frivolous, but condemn as ruinous. Let it be further taken into account, that the formation of laws and regulations for the slaves is not left to the uncontrouled sentiments and feelings of the more affluent, and consequently, it may be presumed, more liberal of the resident land-owners. For the colonial house of assembly, which answers to our House of Commons, is chosen by the resident white proprietors at large, and must necessarily be governed in great measure by their general sentiments and feelings. Nor can it be supposed to be uninfluenced by what is here called the popular voice, but which, in the West Indies, is the voice of the white colonists only, and these too of the lower order, among whom the *esprit de corps* is peculiarly strong. These borderers on the despised coloured race are naturally the most hostile to them, and the most tenacious of those complexional privileges which constitute their own social elevation. The voice, therefore, of the populace in the West Indies, or what may be called the cry of the mob, is always adverse to the humane and liberal principles by which the slavery of the blacks should be mitigated, and by which they should be gradually prepared for the enjoyment of freedom.

These considerations are of no trifling moment ; and they may be, in some measure, illustrated by some transactions which took place not long ago in the largest, except Jamaica,

and the longest settled of all our colonies, the island of Barbadoes; though there are in that colony more resident proprietors than in any other, in proportion to the whole population. The facts I here allude to may have the more weight, because they are not liable to the objection, which has been sometimes urged against the abolitionists when they have quoted laws and transactions of an old date, that they formed an unfair test of the opinions and feelings of the present generation; for they took place so recently as the latter part of 1804.

It had long been a reproach to Barbadoes, that the murder of a slave by his owner, instead of being a capital crime, as in most of our other West Indian colonies, was, in that colony, punishable only by a fine of 15*l*. * Lord Seaforth, the governor, therefore, himself a West Indian proprietor, wishing to wipe off the blot, sent a message, in the common form, to the house of assembly, recommending that an act should be passed to make the murder of a slave a capital

* The murder of another man's slave was punished more severely, the penalty being then 25*l*. to be paid to the public treasury, and double the slave's value to the owner. But to subject the criminal to any punishment, the murder was to have been committed "of wantonness, or only of bloody mindedness or cruel intention:" and lest there should be any disposition to visit the crime too severely, it was specially enacted, that "if any Negro or other slave under punishment by his master or his order, for running away, or any other crimes or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately shall suffer in life or member, which seldom happens, no persons whatsoever shall be liable to any fine therefore."

felony. There seems every reason to believe that the council, or colonial house of lords, would gladly have assented to the proposition. But strange as it may appear to those who are unacquainted with West Indian prejudices, notwithstanding the time and manner in which the proposition was brought forward, the house of assembly absolutely refused to make the alteration.

If the bare statement of this fact must shock every liberal mind, how much will the shock be increased, when it is known under what circumstances it was that this refusal took place. For it had happened very recently, that several most wanton and atrocious murders had been committed on slaves; and some of them accompanied with circumstances of the most horrid and disgusting barbarity. Lord Seaforth felt all the horror likely to be produced by such incidents in a generous and feeling mind. He writes thus to Lord Camden, then the Secretary of State for the Colonies. "I inclose the Attorney-general's letter to me on the subject of the Negroes so most wantonly murdered. I am sorry to say, *several other instances of the same barbarity* have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as I only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general." It is due to Mr. Beccles, the Attorney-general, and to Mr. Coulthurst, the Advocate-general, to state, that they also felt and expressed themselves on the occasion just as persons in

the same rank of life would have done in this country. Lord Seaforth also thus described the official papers he transmitted, as to the murders he had mentioned in some former letters, "they are selected from *a great number*, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble to get to the bottom of, than this business, *so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people*. However, a great part of my object is answered by the alarm my interference has excited, and the attention it has called to the business. Bills are already proposed to make murder felony in both the council and the assembly, but I fear they will be thrown out for the present in the assembly: the council are unanimous on the side of humanity.* Lord Seaforth's prediction was but too fully

* The letter from the Attorney-general of Barbadoes to Lord Seaforth throws so much light on the popular feeling of the lower class of white men in Barbadoes, that it ought not to be suppressed, although it is a humiliating and disgusting recital:—"Extract of a letter from the Attorney-general of Barbadoes to the Governor of the Island:—"A Mr. ———, the manager of a plantation in the neighbourhood, had some months before purchased an African lad, who was much attached to his person, and slept in a passage contiguous to his chamber. On Sunday night there was an alarm of fire in the plantation, which induced Mr. ——— to go out hastily, and the next morning he missed the lad, who he supposed intended to follow him in the night, and had mistaken his way. He sent to his neighbours, and to Mr. C. among the rest, to inform them that his African lad had accidentally strayed from him;

verified ; — the assembly threw out the bill, and the law against wilful murder remained in its pristine state.

that he could not speak a word of English, and that possibly he might be found breaking canes, or taking something else for his support ; in which case, he requested that they would not injure him, but return him, and he, Mr. ——— himself, would pay any damage he might have committed. A day or two after the owner of the boy was informed that Mr. C. and H. had killed a Negro in a neighbouring gully, and buried him there. He went to Mr. C. to inquire into the truth of the report, and intended to have the grave opened, to see whether it was his African lad. *Mr. C. told him, a Negro had been killed and buried there ; but assured him it was not his, for he knew him very well, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. Upon this the owner went away satisfied.* But receiving further information, which left no doubt upon his mind that it was his Negro, he returned, and opened the grave, and found it to be so. I was his leading counsel, and the facts stated in my brief were as follows: That C. and H. being informed that there was a Negro lurking in the gully, went armed with muskets, and took several Negro men with them. The poor African, seeing a parcel of men coming to attack him, was frightened ; he took up a stone to defend himself, and retreated into a cleft rock, where they could not easily come at him : they then went for some trash, put it into the crevices of the rock behind him, and set it on fire : after it had burnt so as to scorch the poor fellow, he ran into a pool of water close by ; they sent a Negro to bring him out, and he threw the stone at the Negro ; upon which the two white men fired several times at him with the guns loaded with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition, for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot, that it was like a cullender. *The white savages ordered the Negroes to dig a grave, and whilst they were dig-*

I should be glad to be able to refer the conduct of the assembly, in this instance, altogether to the influence of the lower orders over their minds. This, doubtless, we may hope, had some

ging it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him, but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it, and covered over ; and there seems to be some doubt whether he was then quite dead. C. and H. deny this ; but the owner assured me that he could prove it by more than one witness ; and I have reason to believe it to be true, because on the day of trial C. and H. did not suffer the cause to come to a hearing, but paid the penalties and the costs of suit, which it is not supposed they would have done had they been innocent.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.”

The same transaction, with another far more dreadful murder, in which there was a deliberate ingenuity of cruelty which almost exceeds belief, but of which I will spare my readers the recital, is related, with scarcely any variation as to circumstances, by the Advocate-general, who, as well as the gentleman of whose estate the criminal was the manager, and who was at the time absent, expressed their most lively indignation against such horrid cruelty. It may be proper to remark, that the story of the poor boy strikingly shews that such protection as the Negro slave occasionally receives from the laws, is too often to be ascribed rather to the master's care of his property, than to any more generous motive. The master, in this case, when he had only reason to believe that a Negro had been killed and buried out of the way, and not that it was his own slave, goes away satisfied. Is there a human being who in this country would have so done ? Again, it is a suggestion which the circumstances of the story enforce on us, that the crowd which was now collected, instead of being shocked at such barbarity, were rather abettors of it ; and then we hear the white savages, (as the Attorney-general justly styles them,) order the Negroes who were present to dig a grave for their wretched country-

share in producing the effect ; though considering that in their circumstances it was peculiarly their duty to set the tone of public judgment and feeling to the bulk of the community, this would not be a very creditable plea. But it is due to truth to remark, that there is no hint to this effect in the papers laid before the House of Commons : on the contrary, in the Assembly's answer, there is an expression of resentment against the Governor, and an intimation of the danger of interfering between master and slave.

This incident will exhibit to every considerate reader a striking specimen of the state of the public mind in the West Indies, at least so recently as 1805, in regard to the African race : and it may serve in some degree to shew the error into which we should fall, by conceiving that the bulk of the white population in our colonies, in estimating the proper conduct to be observed towards the slaves, would think and feel like ourselves. Even in this land of liberty and humanity, acts of atrocious cruelty have been perpetrated. We have heard of an apprentice being starved to death by her mistress ; and, more recently, the British Governor of an African settlement caused the death of a soldier by exces-

man. They knew their state too well to refuse ; and accordingly, with a promptitude of obedience which, with all our ideas of their sunk and prostrate spirits, must surprise us, they immediately executed the order.

sive punishment. But what was the effect on the public mind? In both cases it was difficult to prevent the populace from anticipating the execution of the sentence of the law. In Barbadoes, on the contrary, the proposal to punish such enormities by more than a small fine, was just as unpopular as it would be in this country, to inflict a punishment which should be utterly disproportionate to the crime—such as hanging a man for petty larceny. Except among the highest and best educated classes, the natural sympathy was reversed; and the most horrible murders, some of them attended with circumstances too shocking for recital, instead of exciting any just commiseration for the Negro race, had actually worked in the opposite direction. And is it to assemblies subject to the influence of such popular prejudices as these, and sitting in the bosom of such communities, that we can commit the temporal and eternal interests of many hundred thousands of these despised fellow creatures?

If this case itself suggests to us a useful distrust of the colonial assemblies, in what relates to the Negroes, the sequel of it will not perhaps be less useful in enabling us to judge of their probable conduct, even when they may profess a disposition to conform to our wishes. Whether it was that the influence of the higher members of the Barbadoes community worked at last upon the minds of the assembly, or that the effect likely to be produced in the English Parliament led

to a change of conduct, so it was that the assembly ultimately gave way, and it was supposed, that by the new law of Barbadoes, no less than by that of the other islands, the wilful murder of a slave was made a capital offence. Such, indeed, was the statement made afterwards by more than one advocate for the West Indians, in the controversy in 1816, concerning the Registry Bill; and the abolitionists were reproached with having referred to a period when the law had been different, as if it had been of an antiquated date. Yet, when the statute book itself was examined, (which, I confess, not doubting the accuracy of the statement, I did not look into for several years,) it was found that the alleged reformation of the law is highly problematical at least, if not clearly and totally evasive; for instead of simply declaring the well-defined crime of wilful murder to be a capital felony when perpetrated on a slave, the enacting words are, "if any person shall hereafter wilfully, *maliciously, wantonly*, and WITHOUT PROVOCATION kill and murder any slave, &c." If, hereafter, any of those "*White Savages*," so justly termed such by the Attorney-general of Barbadoes, in wreaking their vengeance on the wretched subjects of their tyranny, should actually murder any of their slaves, or the slaves of others, would there be a hope, even if all the scarcely superable obstacles arising from the absolute rejection of Negro testimony were to be overcome, of a conviction

under the terms of this act? What offender could be unable to prove, to the satisfaction of a Barbadoes jury, that there had been *some provocation*? Yet this is the amended, — this, I suppose, the ameliorating law passed in April, 1805, entitled, “An act for *the better protection* of the slaves of this island.”*

Surely, with these and the many other evidences we have had of the state of mind respecting Negroes, which prevails in the Colonies, we should be more culpable than they, if we were still to commit implicitly to their legislatures the task of devising and carrying into execution such physical and moral reforms as humanity demands in the slavery of the West Indies. More culpable; I say it advisedly; for, though it is no praise to us, but to the good providence of God, we are exempt from the influence of the harsh prejudices to which they, in some degree by our concurrent fault, have been subjected.

The information also which we now possess, as to the African character, would aggravate our criminality. For though the day, I trust, is gone by for ever, in which the alleged inferiority of intellect and incurable barbarity of the African race were supposed to extenuate their oppression, yet it ought not to be left unnoticed, that the notions which formerly prevailed to their prejudice, in these respects, have of late

* See papers entitled Colonial Laws respecting Slaves, 1788—1815, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 5th April, 1816.

years been abundantly refuted, not only by authority but experience. It may be confidently affirmed, that there never was any uncivilised people of whose dispositions we have received a more amiable character than that which is given of the native Africans by Parke and Golberry, both of whom visited those districts of Africa from which victims for the Slave Trade were furnished; and whose testimony in their favour will naturally be admitted with less reserve, because neither of them could be biassed by any wish to discountenance the Slave Trade, they having evidently felt no desire for its abolition.

But it is at Sierra Leone, that long despised and calumniated colony, that the African character has been most effectually and experimentally vindicated. The first seeds of civilization which were sown there by the Christian philanthropy of Mr. Granville Sharpe nearly perished from the unkindly soil to which they had been committed, but they were saved from early destruction, and cultured at length successfully, under the fostering care and indefatigable attention of the late excellent Mr. H. Thornton, and by other good and able men, who, both at home and in the colony, co-operated with him; by one living benefactor especially, who will be hereafter venerated as the steady, enlightened, and unwearied, though unostentatious friend of Africa. It is at Sierra Leone that the great experiment on human nature has

been tried ; and there it has appeared, that the poor African barbarians, just rescued from the holds of slave-ships, are capable, not merely of being civilized, but of soon enjoying, with advantage, the rights and institutions of British freemen. In truth, to have formed any conclusions against the Negroes from the experience we had of them in their state of bondage, was not less unphilosophical than unjust. It was remarked by M. Dupuis, the British consul at Mogadore, that even the generality of European Christians, after a long captivity and severe treatment among the Arabs, appeared at first exceedingly stupid and insensible. " If," he adds, " they have been any considerable time in slavery, they appear lost to reason and feeling ; their spirits broken, and their faculties sunk in a species of stupor, which I am unable adequately to describe. They appear degraded even below the Negro slave. The succession of hardships, without any protecting law to which they can appeal for any alleviation or redress, seems to destroy every spring of exertion or hope in their minds. They appear indifferent to every thing around them ; abject, servile, and brutish." *

If the native intelligence and buoyant independence of Britons cannot survive in the dank and baleful climate of personal slavery, could it be reasonably expected that the poor

* See Quarterly Review for January 7. 1816.— Article, *Tombuctoo*.

Africans, unsupported by any consciousness of personal dignity or civil rights, should not yield to the malignant influences to which they had so long been subjected, and be depressed even below the level of the human species? But at Sierra Leone, they have resumed the stature and port of men, and have acquired, in an eminent degree, the virtues of the citizen and the subject. Witness the peace, and order, and loyalty which have generally prevailed in this colony, in a remarkable degree ; especially under the present excellent Governor, Sir Charles McCarthy. Still more, these recent savages, having become the subjects of religious and moral culture, have manifested the greatest willingness to receive instruction, and made a practical proficiency in Christianity, such as might put Europeans to the blush. Not only have they learned with facility the principles of the Christian faith ; but they have shewn, by their mutual kindnesses, and by the attachment and gratitude to their worthy pastors and superintendents, that they have derived from their knowledge of Christianity its moral and practical fruits.

The same testimony as to the progress of the Negro children, in common school learning, has been given by all the masters who have instructed them in the Island of Hayti ; and the missionaries, in our different West Indian islands, testify, with one consent, the gratitude and attachment which the West Indian, no less than

the Sierra Leone Negroes feel to those who condescend to become their teachers.

Again, the impression so assiduously attempted heretofore to be made, that the *indolence* of the Negro race was utterly incurable, and that without the driving whip they never would willingly engage in agricultural labour, has been shewn to be utterly without foundation. Mr. Parke relates, that the Africans, when prompted by any adequate motives, would work diligently and perseveringly both in agricultural and manufacturing labours. And there is on the African coast a whole nation of the most muscular men and the hardest labourers, who, from their known industry, are hired both for government service, and by the European traders, as workmen, both on ship-board and on shore.

Nor have instances of a similar kind been wanting even in the West Indies, whenever circumstances have been at all favourable to voluntary industry. Since the dissolution of the black corps, (a measure which the abolitionists are scarcely, I fear, excusable for not having opposed, though prompted to acquiesce in it by unwillingness to thwart, when not indispensably necessary, the prejudices of the colonists) many of the disbanded soldiers have maintained themselves by their own agricultural labours, and have manifested a degree of industry that ought to have silenced for ever all imputations on the diligence of their race.

But another still more striking instance has been lately afforded in Trinidad. There many hundreds of American Negroes, at the close of the late unhappy war with the United States, were, by the humane policy of Sir Ralph Woodford, received into Trinidad, to the no small alarm of the planters. These were slaves enfranchised by desertion, yet instead of becoming a nuisance to the community by idleness and dissolute manners, as prejudice loudly foretold, they have maintained themselves well, in various ways, by their own industry and prudence. Many of them have worked as hired labourers for the planters with so much diligence and good conduct, that they are now universally regarded as a valuable acquisition to the colony; and it is supposed, that a large addition to their number would be very gladly received.

Are all these important lessons to be read to us without producing any influence on our minds? Ought they not to enforce on us, as by a voice from heaven, that we have been most cruelly and inexcusably degrading, to the level of brutes, those whom the Almighty had made capable of enjoying our own civil blessings in this world, not less clearly than he has fitted them to be heirs of our common immortality?

But while we are loudly called on by justice and humanity to take measures without delay for improving the condition of our West Indian slaves, self-interest also inculcates the same duty, and with full as clear a voice. It is a great

though common error, that notwithstanding we must, on religious and moral grounds, condemn the West Indian system, yet, that in a worldly view, it has been eminently gainful both to individuals and to the community at large. On the contrary, I believe it might be proved to any inquiring and unprejudiced mind, that taking in all considerations of political economy, and looking to the lamentable waste of human life among our soldiers and seamen, raised and recruited at a great expence, as well as to the more direct pecuniary charge of protecting the sugar colonies, no system of civil polity was ever maintained at a greater price, or was less truly profitable either to individuals or to the community, than that of our West Indian settlements. Indeed, it would have been a strange exception to all those established principles which Divine Providence has ordained for the moral benefit of the world, if national and personal prosperity were generally and permanently to be found to arise from injustice and oppression. There may be individual instances of great fortunes amassed by every species of wrong doing. A course, ruinous in the long run, may, to an individual, or for a time, appear eminently profitable ; nevertheless, it is unquestionably true, that the path of prosperity rarely diverges long and widely from that of integrity and virtue ; or, to express it in a familiar adage, — that honesty is the best policy.

It ought not to be necessary to assert such

principles as these in an age in which it has been incontrovertibly established by the soundest of our political economists, — that the base and selfish, though plausible views, which formerly prevailed so widely among statesmen, and taught them to believe that the prosperity and elevation of their country would be best promoted by the impoverishment and depression of its neighbours, were quite fallacious; and when we have now learned the opposite and beneficent lesson, — that every nation is, in fact, benefited by the growing affluence of others, and that all are thus interested in the well-being and improvement of all. At such an enlightened period as this, when commerce herself adopts the principles of true morality, and becomes liberal and benevolent, will it be believed that the Almighty has rendered the depression and misery of the cultivators of the soil in our West Indian colonies necessary, or even conducive, to their prosperity and safety? No, surely! The oppression of these injured fellow-creatures, however it may be profitable in a few instances, can never be generally politic; and in the main, and ultimately, the comfort of the labourer, and the well-being of those who have to enjoy the fruits of his labour, will be found to be coincident.

As for the apprehensions of ruin, expressed by the West Indians, from the instruction and moral improvement of their slaves, or from the interference of the Imperial Legislature, we have been taught by experience in the Slave

Trade controversy, that their apprehensions are not always reasonable, either in degree, or in the objects to which they are directed. How confidently did all the Slave Traders predict their own ruin, together with that of the West Indies, and also of the town of Liverpool, from the regulations of the bill for limiting the number of slaves to be taken in ships of given dimensions, while the trade should be tolerated, and for requiring certain particulars of food and medical attendance! yet, after a few years, the regulations were allowed, not merely to be harmless, but to have been positively and greatly beneficial. The total ruin of the sugar colonies was still more confidently foretold by the planters, the assemblies, and their agents, by their parliamentary advocates, and the West Indian committee, as a sure consequence of abolishing the Slave Trade; and yet there is not, I believe, an intelligent West Indian who will not now confess, that it would have been greatly for the benefit of all our old colonies, if the Slave Trade had been abolished many years sooner; and that if it had continued some years longer, it must have completed their destruction.

Mr. Dundas, in 1792, did not hesitate to ridicule the vain terrors of the parties whose battle he was fighting, and, by their own selection, as their commander-in-chief, though emancipation itself was the object. In illustration of the apprehensions which many entertained of the

consequences of changing their slaves into free labourers, he stated that some years before, in certain districts of Scotland, the persons who laboured in the salt-works and coal-mines were actually slaves; and that a proposal being made to emancipate them, instantly the owners of the works came forward, declaring that if their vassals were to be raised to the condition of free labourers, they themselves would be utterly ruined; for that such was the peculiarity, such the unpleasant nature of those species of labours, that they could not depend on hired service, as in other instances. "But at length," added Mr. Dundas, "the good sense of the age obtained the victory.—The salters and colliers were changed into free labourers, and all the terrors of the owners ended in smoke."

While thus alive to imaginary dangers, or rather while thus assiduous in endeavouring to inspire alarm in the mother country, to prevent her listening to the claims of justice and mercy, our planters appear blind to the new and real dangers that are accumulating around them. Providence graciously seems to allow them a golden interval, which, duly improved, might prevent the dreadful explosion that may otherwise be expected. But they neglect it with a supineness and insensibility resembling infatuation. With a community of near 800,000 free blacks, many of them accustomed to the use of arms, within sight of the greatest of our West-Indian islands; with a slave population in Cuba

and Porto Rico, which has been of late so fearfully augmented with imported Africans, as, according to all received principles, to produce, even in pacific times, and much more in the present æra of transatlantic convulsions, the utmost extremity of danger; with the example afforded in many of the United States, and in almost all the new republics of South America, where Negro slavery has been recently abolished, — is this a time, are these the circumstances, in which it can be wise and safe, if it were even honest and humane, to keep down in their present state of heathenish and almost brutish degradation, the 800,000 Negroes in our West Indian colonies? Here, indeed, is danger, if we observe the signs of the times, whether we take our lesson from the history of men, or form our conclusions from natural reason or from the revealed will of God.

But raise these poor creatures from their depressed condition, and if they are not yet fit for the enjoyment of British freedom, elevate them at least from the level of the brute creation into that of rational nature — dismiss the driving whip, and thereby afford place for the developement of the first rudiments of civil character — implant in them the principle of hope — let free scope be given for their industry, and for their rising in life by their personal good conduct — give them an interest in defending the community to which they belong — teach them that lesson which Chris-

tianity can alone truly inculcate, that the present life is but a short and uncertain span, to which will succeed an eternal existence of happiness or misery — inculcate on them, on the authority of the sacred page, that the point of real importance is not what is the rank or the station men occupy, but how they discharge the duties of life — how they use the opportunities they may enjoy of providing for their everlasting happiness. Taught by Christianity, they will sustain with patience the sufferings of their actual lot, while the same instructress will rapidly prepare them for a better; and instead of being objects at one time of contempt, and at another of terror, (a base and servile passion, which too naturally degenerates into hatred,) they will be soon regarded as a grateful peasantry, the strength of the communities in which they live, — of which they have hitherto been the weakness and the terror, sometimes the mischief and the scourge.

To the real nature of the West Indian system, and still more to the extent of its manifold abuses, the bulk even of well-informed men in this country are, I believe, generally strangers. May it not be from our having sinned in ignorance that we have so long been spared? But ignorance of a duty which we have had abundant means of knowing to be such, can by no one be deemed excusable. Let us not presume too far on the forbearance of the Almighty. Favoured in an unequalled degree with Christian light,

with civil freedom, and with a greater measure of national blessings than perhaps any other country upon earth ever before enjoyed, what a return would it be for the goodness of the Almighty, if we were to continue to keep the descendants of the Africans, whom we have ourselves wrongfully planted in the western hemisphere, in their present state of unexampled darkness and degradation !

While efforts are making to rescue our country from this guilt and this reproach, let every one remember that he is answerable for any measure of assistance which Providence has enabled him to render towards the accomplishment of the good work. In a country in which the popular voice has a powerful and constitutional influence on the government and legislation, to be silent when there is a question of reforming abuses repugnant to justice and humanity, is to share their guilt. Power always implies responsibility ; and the possessor of it cannot innocently be neutral, when by his exertion moral good may be promoted, or evil lessened or removed.

If I may presume to employ a few words on what belongs more particularly to the writer of these lines, I can truly declare, that an irresistible conviction that it is his positive duty to endeavour to rouse his countrymen to a just sense of the importance and urgency of our duties towards the Negro Slaves, has alone compelled him reluctantly thus to come forward

again in such an arduous cause as this, and at a period of life when nature shrinks from a laborious contest. He can but too surely anticipate from experience, that the grossest and most unfounded calumnies will be profusely poured out against him; but he nevertheless proceeds, animated by the wish, and, he will add, the confident hope, that the cause of our African brethren will deeply interest the public mind, and that the legislature will be induced to adopt the course prescribed to us by the strongest obligations of moral and religious duty.

Before I conclude, may I presume to interpose a word of caution to my fellow-labourers in this great cause, — a caution which I can truly say I have ever wished myself to keep in remembrance, and observe in practice: it is, that while we expose and condemn the evils of the system itself, we should treat with candour and tenderness the characters of the West Indian proprietors. Let not the friends of the Africans forget that they themselves might have inherited West Indian property; and that by early example and habit they might have been subjected to the very prejudices which they now condemn. I have before declared, and I now willingly repeat, that I sincerely believe many of the owners of West Indian estates to be men of more than common kindness and liberality; but I myself have found many of them, as I have had every reason to believe, utterly unacquainted with the true nature and practical character of the system with

which they have the misfortune to be connected.

While, however, we speak and act towards the colonists personally with fair consideration and becoming candour, let our exertions in the cause of the unfortunate slaves be zealous and unremitting. Let us act with an energy suited to the importance of the interests for which we contend. Justice, humanity, and sound policy prescribe our course, and will animate our efforts. Stimulated by a consciousness of what we owe to the laws of God and the rights and happiness of man, our exertions will be ardent, and our perseverance invincible. Our ultimate success is sure; and ere long we shall rejoice in the consciousness of having delivered our country from the greatest of her crimes, and rescued her character from the deepest stain of dishonour.

THE END.



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REMARKS

ON

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES.

Samuel A. May

FROM THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER,

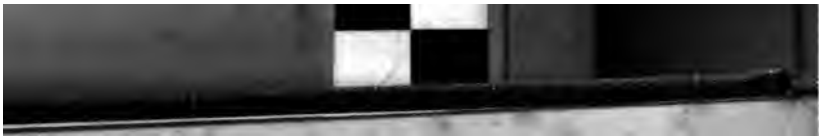
VOL. IV. NO. III.

BOSTON,

BOWLES AND DEARBORN, 72 WASHINGTON STREET.

I. R. Butts and Co. Printers.

1827.



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SLAVERY

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

Among the many works which the discussions respecting the slavery of the British West Indies have called forth, the one published by Mr Stephen a few years ago is perhaps the most valuable.* The author is well known as one of those active and persevering, philanthropists, who have for many years exerted themselves in the cause of the African race. He was by profession a lawyer, and resided for many years in St Christopher. His book testifies that he has well improved his advantages for judging not merely of the theory of the slave laws, but of their practical operation. This volume professes to exhibit the slavery of the British West Indies as it exists in point of law. The author proposes in another part to delineate the state as it exists in practice, though he has thought it advisable not to adhere rigorously to this division of the subject. The part already published contains a very searching examination of the slave codes of the colonies, and a critical comparison between them and the laws of other countries similarly situated, both ancient and modern.

The vague and general declamations against slavery which we hear so frequently, and the violent indignation which is so often expressed at particular instances of abuse and cruelty,

* The Slavery of the British West India Colonies delineated, as it exists both in Law and Practice, and compared with the Slavery of other Countries, ancient and modern. By James Stephen, Esq. Vol. I. being a Delineation of the State in Point of Law. London : Butterworth & Son, 1824.

give no satisfactory information as to the peculiar state of society which is so loudly condemned ; still less do they lead to any conclusions as to the means of diminishing or removing the evil. Mr Stephen therefore seems to have adopted the most correct course to enlighten the public mind, by giving 'an accurate description of the state, as it exists both in law and practice, and pointing out some of its most ordinary and acknowledged consequences, as far as they affect the happiness or misery of the parties.' His work shows conclusively the injustice of the slave laws both customary and legislative, their unnecessary severity to the negro, and their insufficient protection of him, even if carried into thorough execution ; and that from the mode of trial, the rejection of negro testimony, and the peculiar state of society, the most atrocious crimes of the whites often go unpunished. He shows also that the origin of many of the most cruel laws and practices, is to be found, not in the necessity which is alleged to excuse them, but in the scorn and antipathy with which the European regards the African. And while his work proves completely the ruinous tendency of the existing system, it must satisfy every reader that there is little hope of any reformation being effected by the colonial legislatures. The following is his recapitulation.

'In his relation to the master, the slave is degraded to the level of brutal and inanimate nature. He is mere property ; and subjected as such to all the evils that the various rights annexed to property can entail on a sensitive and rational being. He is removed from his home and native settlement, sold and exiled, bereft of his wife and children, and of all that makes existence dear to him, whenever the owner's choice, or that of his unsatisfied creditors, may so ordain. He is demised, mortgaged, entailed, and in other modes subjected to the absolute government of a master, who has often but a small or temporary interest in his preservation and welfare ; and who still oftener is unable to provide for his support. His labors, his subsistence, his discipline, and his punishments, are all at the arbitrary discretion of his immediate rulers, who are for the most part only the mercenary delegates of an owner resident in a distant land. But to these are added subordinate delegates of fearful name, whose powers are awfully important, and susceptible of no effectual control. To the drivers is committed the distribution and exaction of the common labors of the field, their apportionment among the old and the young, the strong and the feeble, the males and the females ; and to these lowest

agents even, though negro slaves, unenlightened and unsoftened by religion, immoral and corrupt, bereft, by their degradation, of all liberal feelings, and hardened like public executioners by the habitual infliction of tortures penally imposed, the law permits the master to delegate his awful powers. To them, accordingly, he does delegate that which is practically the most formidable and pernicious of them all, the use of the driving whip.

‘Such as we have seen are the outlines of the private relation, as recognised and enforced by law.’

‘In regard to the whole white population, except the owner and his agents, the negro slave stands, as I have shown, in a predicament still more peculiar. He has no legal rights in his relations to them; or what is in effect the same, no remedies for wrongs received from them. His person, and such property as he is allowed by the master to possess, are virtually at their mercy. He can neither prosecute for, nor find evidence of his wrongs; nor exercise even, without subjecting himself to capital punishment, the right of self-defence. We have seen that those recent laws which affect to protect him in some degree against free strangers, and even against the master himself, are, with an unimportant exception or two, incapable of execution, and absolutely useless.

‘To the state, the slave also has his relation; for this chattel in the master’s hands, is recognised by the penal code, as a rational and deeply responsible being. I have, therefore, reviewed this relation also; and stated the condition of the colonial slaves in their character of subjects, or members of civil society. And what is the result? Of all the ordinary benefits of civil life, the slave would not have been more completely destitute in an African desert, than in a British colony. Not one of those benefits can be said to be effectually imparted to him, while many are totally and expressly denied. Even education, intellectual, moral, and religious, has been shamefully withheld. But to his crimes, on the other hand, the colonial lawgivers have by no means been inattentive. These have been punished with a severity unknown to the laws of the mother country; and equally unknown in the same colonies when freemen are the delinquents. Numberless petty offences and trespasses, for which the latter are liable only to be fined, or to pay damages in a civil action, have been raised into felonies, when committed by a slave. Desertion, and other domestic offences, which are breaches of duty to the master alone, have been treated as atrocious crimes against the state, and visited with mutilations or death. Nay, these much injured beings have been capitally punished for acts which the laws themselves have recognised as

the direct and necessary fruits of the master's oppression ; and for which, he himself, notwithstanding, was made liable to no legal animadversion at all. Barbarous executions, shocking to nature, have been sanctioned by laws but very lately repealed or disused ; and the dreadful punishment of the workhouse slave chain has been recently devised, and is still inflicted, even during the whole life of the offending slave ; and often for acts, in their nature innocent, and breaches alone of the harsh duties arising from his servile condition.

'Nor is the poor slave less harshly distinguished in the judicial cognizance of his crimes. Modes of trial and conviction have been appointed for him, highly dangerous to the innocent ; as well as inconsistent with the lenity and humane circumspection of English law,—qualities, which in the prosecution of freemen in the same colonies, have not only been retained, but increased.

'To finish this odious summary, the state, thus beyond example severe and cruel, is more loosely, and indefensibly imposed, and with far more difficulty dissolved, than the bonds of slavery ever were in any other age or region. The presumption of law, placed every where else on the side of freedom, here universally weighs against it ; while a despotic exclusion of all servile testimony makes the conflict of truth, with that harsh presumption, in most cases difficult or hopeless ; and, lastly, the colonial legislatures, instead of encouraging voluntary manumissions, have laid restraints, by enormous taxes and other means, on that beneficent power of the master.' pp. 435—436.

Though Mr Stephen's book was written for the express purpose of procuring the interposition of the British government, it deserves an attentive study in this country, from its delineating a state of society and laws very similar to what exists in a large part of the United States. Indeed, the resemblance in point of law is so strong, that by far the greater part of the work is directly applicable to our own country. That there should have been such a likeness previously to the revolution, is perhaps not remarkable. But even since that time the legislatures of our Southern States and those of the British West Indies, seem to have been actuated by a sympathetic spirit in their enactments respecting their colored population.

In comparing, however, the situation of that part of our country which is cursed with a numerous black population, with that of the West Indies, we shall find some cause for self gratulation. The comparative numbers of the blacks

and whites in the States where slavery is permitted, is such that we can have at present no reasonable fear of dangerous insurrections.* The same circumstance affords to every effort made to improve the condition of the blacks in the United States a better prospect of success than in the West Indies. In point of law the slave is better protected, and in point of practice, I believe, 'is better treated here than there. That the numbers of the slaves increase very rapidly in this country, while in most of the West Indies they are constantly diminishing, is sufficient evidence that their condition among us is happier. But what should give most cause for satisfaction is, that a large number of the most enlightened citizens of the Southern States are inimical to slavery, and thoroughly convinced of its pernicious tendency; while in the West Indies the planters, almost to a man, are its friends and advocates. Nor should it be regretted that all improvements in the social condition of the Southern States, must be effected by themselves; and that their legislatures are not in this respect subject to any superior power.

Notwithstanding all these favorable circumstances, slavery is justly considered a great national evil. All our States seem sincere in the wish to remove this curse from our land and to alleviate its miseries. For its existence among us, we must reproach England. The mother country encouraged the importation of slaves into the colonies, regardless of their true interests; while some of the provinces labored earnestly to check the progress of the evil. The continued exertions of the province of Virginia, for this purpose, which were uniformly thwarted and rendered unavailing by the mother country, are well known. And as soon as our allegiance to Great Britain was shaken off, and while we were yet fighting for our independence, an act was passed by Virginia, which prohibited the importation of slaves, and declared every black imported free. Since our independence the slaveholding States have generally been forward to prevent the increase of the evil. They voted unanimously in Congress in favor of the ordinance which prohibited slavery in the territory northwest of the Ohio; and they have since that time cooperated sincerely and zealously in all the measures which our government

* In only one of our States does the number of the blacks equal that of the whites; while in the West Indies the former exceed the latter in the proportion of five to one in some islands, ten to one in others, and in some instances in a still higher proportion.

has adopted for the suppression of the slave trade. The frequency of emancipation, the warm support which is given to the Colonization Society, by many distinguished individuals among them, and the recorded opinions of some of their wisest men with regard to involuntary servitude, are honorable to the country, and encouraging to future exertions to promote the welfare of the African race.

But the citizens of the Southern States, have, upon the subject of slavery, a most unreasonable jealousy of their northern brethren. They appear to think that there are among us many who would abolish slavery throughout the land, at once and at all hazards. There is no reason in fact for this jealousy. I will not undertake to say that there may not be here and there an individual who is insane upon this subject; it would be strange indeed, if no such person could be found. But the insanity of one man is no measure of the opinion of the public. In the opinion of every person here who is in the least familiar with the merits of the question, and indeed of the great body of the community, nothing could be more absurd and dangerous than a sudden enfranchisement of all the negroes. The interest which all cannot but feel upon this subject, may occasionally produce an intemperate warmth of language. But are not the violent, unmannerly, and abusive retorts in which many southern newspapers indulge, equally unjustifiable? If the writings in the Northern States have a tendency to excite the blacks against the whites, which I totally deny, is not the inflammatory language used at the south much more likely to produce the same effect? I certainly would not write a syllable if I believed that it could in any manner operate unfavorably on the character or conduct of the slaves. But is there any danger to be apprehended from a fair and manly examination of this subject, addressed, not to the slaves, but to their masters? I have never heard that the angry and intemperate language with which the Missouri question was argued, or rather fought, produced any effervescence among the colored population at the south. It is known, too, that British publications are widely circulated in our country, which are very far from speaking of domestic slavery with the cautious and mysterious reserve, that seems to be so much desired by its advocates, when any persons but themselves are treating of the subject; but there have been no complaints

that these publications have been injurious. To my mind, the printed statutes of Virginia and South Carolina seem much more likely to excite disaffection and rebellion among their slaves, than all that has ever been published in the Northern States.

It is often complained at the south that the citizens of the north wish to interfere with the management of their slaves. The charge is not very definite ; but let it be understood as it may, it is false and absurd. Not only is the exclusive right of the Southern States to regulate their own property fully recognised ; but the propriety and expediency of leaving it entirely to their management are as fully acknowledged. Our fellow citizens are so far from having the desire which is imputed to them, that they are in general extremely cautious in even expressing their opinions respecting slavery, or the manner in which it may be remedied or alleviated. Doubt and difficulty indeed attend upon every proposal. But this is a subject of national and not merely sectional concern. Every citizen of the United States who has the welfare of his country at heart, has an interest in it. Surely the whole nation has a deep concern in a subject by which one half of it is so immediately and vitally affected. It is a subject on which the friends of humanity cannot forbear to meditate, and on which they have a right to be heard. The law and practice of slavery are as proper topics of discussion, as any other question in legislation or morals.

It needs no argument to show that slavery is a great and growing evil ; but its pernicious effects cannot be fully realized without glancing at the comparative condition of the northern and southern divisions of the country. It is but too manifest that the Southern States are losing their comparative weight in the nation. An examination of the different censuses since 1790, and of the representation in Congress, affords conclusive evidence of this fact. The free States have now a much greater majority in the House of Representatives than they had in 1790. Their gross population has since that time increased more rapidly than that of the slaveholding States ; and if we compare the relative increase of the white population in the two sections of the country, the difference is still more remarkable. In commerce, manufactures, and internal improvements, the superiority of the Northern States is unquestionable. If we look to the means of education, or the general

intelligence, industry, and enterprise—but it is needless to pursue the comparison.*

We would not boast of the more fortunate condition of the Northern States. But we cannot refrain from asking, What has produced this state of things? Is it altogether climate, or is it slavery? The territory of the slaveholding States is much more extensive than that of the free States; their soil, to say the least, is quite as fertile, and their natural advantages for commerce, all things considered, are perhaps equal. As it is not easy to believe that the mere difference of a few degrees of latitude, in a temperate climate, among a people of the same parentage and under the same government, has produced these results, there seems to be no other cause to which they can be ascribed than the institution of slavery.

* The following table of representatives in Congress, which is revised from one in Niles's Register, is believed to be correct.

By the Census of	Whole No. in Congress	From the free States	From the slaves holding States	Majority in favor of the free States
1790	106	58	48	10
1800	142	78	64	14
1810	185	107	78	29
1820	213	124	89	35

The following is taken from the same paper.	
Population in what are called the <i>free</i> States in 1790	2,027,248
Deduct for slaves in those States	49,254
Free inhabitants of the free States, in 1790	1,977,994
Population of the same States in 1820, with that of the new free States	5,225,107
Population of the slave holding States in 1790	1,893,078
Deduct slaves	648,437
Free population of the slaveholding States, in 1790	1,244,641
Population of the same States, in 1820, with that of the new slaveholding States	4,367,588
Deduct slaves	1,528,452
Free population of the slaveholding States, in 1820	2,839,136
Gross excess of population in the free States in 1790 only	134,170
The same in 1820	857,519
Excess of free population in the free States in 1790	733,353
The same in 1820	2,388,000
Majority of federal numbers in the free States in 1790	375,000
The same in 1820	1,470,000

The whole article in Niles's Register, merits an attentive perusal. It contains much valuable statistical information.

Of all human inventions slavery has been the source of the greatest amount of crime and misery. The system, even under its mildest forms, has been the curse of every country in which it has been adopted, equally baneful to the oppressed and the oppressor. The human spirit cannot be tamed down like a beast of the field. The masters of slaves always lead a life of fear and suspicion. The student of ancient history will have a thousand facts crowding upon his recollection to attest the truth of these remarks. The Spartans systematically murdered the young and vigorous Helots, to prevent their numbers from becoming dangerous. A million slaves are said to have perished in one unfortunate insurrection in Sicily. Whenever a master in Rome was murdered in his own house, every one of his domestic slaves might be put to death.* If the Romans had felt themselves safe, would they have passed this cruel and barbarous edict? History has shown us the extent of their danger. The desperate insurrections of their slaves more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction. But it may be said, these things happened in distant times, and these spirited actors were whites. Yet the annals of the West Indies present a melancholy catalogue of insurrections by the blacks, and even in our own country, where the evil is far less pressing, we have frequent accounts of murders and robberies perpetrated by them, and we have more than once been alarmed by their plots and conspiracies.

But even a more serious evil than this, is the corrupting influence which slavery exerts upon the character of the masters. It is a melancholy truth, that wherever this institution has prevailed, it has produced a general dissoluteness of morals; it has rendered the masters indolent, proud and revengeful to their equals, and arbitrary and cruel to their inferiors. A celebrated writer indeed has not scrupled to ascribe the barbarous manners of refined antiquity to the practice of domestic slavery.†

The situation of our slaveholding States presents two important subjects of inquiry; the first, as to the possibility of removing all the blacks from the country and the mode of accom-

* We cannot realize the complete inhumanity of this law, unless we take into view the immense number of slaves possessed by individuals in Rome. Tacitus mentions that four hundred slaves of Pedanius Secundus were actually executed under this law. *Tac. Ann.* 14, 43.

† 'Nor can a more probable reason be assigned for the severe, I might say, barbarous manners of ancient times than the practice of domestic slavery.'—*Hume's Essays*, Vol. I. *On the Populousness of Ancient Nations*.

plishing it ; the second, as to what can be done to improve their condition, supposing them to remain among us. Both problems present great, and, in the opinion of many, insuperable difficulties.

Undoubtedly if all the blacks could be removed from the country, a great object would be gained ; and there is reason to believe that a large and most respectable part of the community at the south, would rejoice to be relieved of the evil in this way. But it is to be feared that the colonization of any large proportion of the blacks, though so desirable, will never be effected. If it be attempted to remove them gradually, will not the natural increase of population supply any diminution of numbers that can be anticipated ? Political economists generally admit, that emigration not only does not reduce the population of the parent country, but usually does not retard the rate of increase. In the older Southern States the number of slaves has for a long time been rapidly increasing, notwithstanding the great numbers of them carried into the new States. And if ten or twenty thousand should be exported from this country annually for ten years, there would probably be as many blacks here at the end of that time as if no such exportation had taken place. If the attempt should be made to transport them in larger numbers, it would evidently be very difficult to defray the mere expenses of transportation. And even if sufficient funds for this purpose could be raised, a much larger sum would be wanted to compensate the owners of slaves, as most of the planters would hardly give up for nothing what they consider a valuable part of their property. Then, as the slaves diminished in numbers, their value would increase ; since no other class of laborers would flow into the country with sufficient rapidity to supply the place of the emigrants ; and any sudden diminution of numbers to an extent that would be effective towards the proposed object, would seriously reduce the wealth and resources of the Southern States. This injury it is true would be temporary. But is it probable that these States are prepared to make so great a sacrifice, as the annual exportation of a large proportion of their laboring population ? Besides, if what is generally asserted be true, that the constitution of the whites will not support the labors of the field in many parts of the Southern States, the retaining of the blacks, at least in those parts of the country, is a matter of necessity.

I trust that nothing in these remarks will be considered as intimating an unfavorable opinion of the Colonization Society.

It merits and will doubtless receive the liberal support of the public. It is engaged in a noble cause, and cannot prove otherwise than a blessing to our land. Even if it did no more than direct the attention of the public to the condition of our colored population and the means of improving it, the value of the association would be inestimable. But the citizens both of the south and north, are yielding too readily to the flattering suggestion, that this Society is of itself sufficient to effect all that is possible for the improvement of the blacks; and that all other efforts for the same object are useless and unnecessary. But the removal of the free blacks, though a great benefit in itself, can operate but slowly and indirectly to improve the condition of the great mass of their brethren remaining in servitude. Even allowing this Society a greater success than its most sanguine friends anticipate, the removal of the pressure of our black population can only be looked forward to as a very distant event. This is but a remote and possible consequence of the exertions of the association, and forms no part of its direct and immediate objects, and must be effected by means over which it has no control. It is plain, therefore, that the establishment of this institution, does not in any degree absolve our fellow citizens of the south from further exertions in behalf of their oppressed and suffering population.

What then can be done to improve the condition of this population? No doubt sooner or later slavery will cease to exist in America. In spite of complexion and features, the same spirit of improvement, which in the old world has raised the condition of those held in servitude, will in this country gradually lead to the emancipation of the blacks. There is a regenerating power in our nature which no continuance of abuses and no practice of oppression can destroy; and which is ever renovating the moral and political condition of our race. The only question is, whether the improvement and enfranchisement of the negroes shall be left to the operation of time and accident, or whether the present generation shall exert itself to forward the glorious work.

To give sudden freedom to all the blacks at once, would, I admit, be a rash and dangerous experiment. To make freedom a valuable gift, they must be taught how to use it; they must receive a moral and religious education; they must be instructed in the rights and duties of freemen. All this can be attempted, with any prospect of success, only upon the young. It would not

be safe to pass any general laws giving freedom to those now grown up in servitude ; nor would such a measure probably prove useful to the very parties whom it was intended to benefit. The first object then should be education. The slaveholding States, with a view to their emancipation, ought, therefore, to provide by law for the education of the negroes. What would be the best mode of doing this, I shall not here stop to inquire ; but all the necessary instruction might doubtless be given at an expense very small in comparison with the object, and which would be more than repaid in the improved conduct of the negroes.

All the blacks hereafter born should be declared free after arriving at a certain age ; perhaps twentyfive years. And though I believe the injury to slave owners from this measure, would be much less than is commonly supposed, still I think compensation ought to be made to them, and if possible to the full market price of every person emancipated. The property of individuals ought never to be sacrificed for the public benefit without compensation. Indeed the principle of compensation is essential to any rational scheme of enfranchisement, where slaves are so numerous as they are at the south.

The extinction of slavery being a great national object, coming within the letter of the Constitution which gives Congress the power to provide for the general welfare of the United States, the national government would be justified in cooperating with the State governments, by contributing largely to this compensation. The sales of the national lands might be appropriated for this purpose. All the internal improvements effected by the national government, all the roads and canals made or contemplated, the navies, and the fortifications, upon which it is annually expending millions, seem but trifling objects when compared with the redemption of a nation of slaves.

It is easy to anticipate the objections to the measure proposed. It will of course be called visionary and Utopian. It will be said that the evil is incurable, and the mere expense requisite to give effect to this plan intolerable. The expense would indeed be a heavy burden, but not beyond the power of the nation to bear. The compensation must necessarily be regulated by the resources of the States making it ; and the contribution of the United States government, in like manner, proportioned to its means.

It will also be objected that the experiment would be haz-

ardous. Nor am I unaware that many difficulties must be overcome, before any scheme of the kind can be carried into successful operation. A long and tedious interval must at all events precede the complete liberation of the negroes. But the danger is magnified to the eyes of the slaveholders. It should be considered that those who are to be liberated are to be educated; brought up with the knowledge that at a certain time they will become free, and be as much as possible prepared for freedom. The experiment too has been tried. A system substantially the same has put an end to slavery in the Northern States, not only without inconvenience, but to the manifest advantage of all classes of society. It is true that the number of the blacks in the Southern States, bears a greater proportion to that of the whites, than it did in any of the Northern States at the time emancipation was commenced. But at present the negroes are in no State sufficiently numerous to cause any reasonable fears whether they are slaves or freemen. The great cause of alarm is, that in every slaveholding State, with scarcely an exception, the black population is constantly increasing more rapidly than the white.*

* The following table, extracted from a paper by George Harvey, originally published in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, and since in the Boston Journal for Nov. 1823, shows the number of free persons to every slave in each State and Territory as given by the different censuses.

States and Territories.	Free persons in 1790	Free persons in 1800	Free persons in 1810	Free persons in 1820	States and Territories.	Free persons in 1790	Free persons in 1800	Free persons in 1810	Free persons in 1820
Maine	0	0	0	0	S. C.	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.9
N. H.	897	22981	0	0	Geo.	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.3
Mass.	0	0	0	0	Lou.	—	—	6	1.2
R. I.	72	181	711	1851	Tenn.	—	7	5	4.3
Conn.	85	263	844	2336	Ky.	5	4.5	4	3.5
Ver.	5345	0	0	0	Ala.	—	—	1.2	2
N. Y.	15	27	63	135	Miss.	—	1.5	1.4	1.3
N. J.	15	16	22	36	Illi.	—	—	72	59
Penn.	115	352	1016	4972	Misso.	—	—	—	5.8
Del.	6	9	16	15	Mich.	—	—	197	0
Ohio	9	0	0	0	Ark.	—	—	—	8
India.	—	41	102	774	D. C.	—	4	3.4	4
Md.	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.8	Whole	—	—	—	—
Va.	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	U. S.	4.6	4.9	5.1	5.3
N. C.	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.1					

The character 00, is used to signify that there are no slaves in the State opposite to the name of which it is placed. In the Southern States and Territories in 1820, the proportion of slaves to free persons was nearly as one to two, there being 1,508,747 slaves and 2,955,987 free persons.

Many other objections have been urged against all plans of the kind suggested. But the field of contention is every day growing narrower. Fortunately, the advocates for the abolition of slavery stand on very different ground from that they occupied fifty years ago. Few persons, at the present day, have the hardihood to assert the natural fitness and propriety of slavery, or to talk of the good fortune of the Africans, in being transplanted from barbarous and heathenish nations into civilized and christian communities. Almost the only arguments now used in favor of personal servitude, at least in this country, are drawn from the danger and difficulty of changing the existing state of society.

It is frequently said that the Africans differ so much from us in color and features, as to make it impossible, or undesirable if possible, that the two races should ever mingle into one, and therefore that it would be dangerous in the extreme to raise up a powerful nation in the midst of us, with which we could never be united by the ties of blood and friendship. The argument would be a strong one, if the question were on the expediency of introducing negroes into the country. But unfortunately the evil already exists to an alarming extent; a nation of strangers is now grown up in the heart of the United States. It may well be doubted whether they would be more formidable when free, than they are while slaves. When men have their persons and property protected by equal laws, they are not very apt to rebel to gain political privileges. Besides, the conduct of the blacks gives us no reason to expect that a more liberal treatment will be received by them with disdain and ingratitude. They cannot but feel, when made freemen, that a great benefit has been conferred on them. Nor would the state of the emancipated negroes be very different from that of large classes of the population in many parts of Europe and Asia. And although this may not be the most eligible condition of society, it certainly may exist without any great danger. The opposers of enfranchisement, in their zeal, are very apt to forget, that scarcely any frame of society can be worse than that now existing in the Southern States; and that the question is not, whether any proposed system be absolutely good, but whether it is not better than the present.

In fact, can any serious danger be anticipated from the negroes when freed? The whites in most of the Southern States, as has been already stated, far exceed the blacks in numbers.

In only one, are the slaves more numerous than their masters. In the intelligence and resources of the two parties, there could be no comparison. The free blacks might not, perhaps, in the beginning, make the very best citizens; but they would be less troublesome than slaves; and we do not believe the most intelligent part of the community at the South, would apprehend that their conduct would prove riotous and violent. Besides, the work of enfranchisement would be gradual, and the number of newly emancipated negroes would never, therefore, be very large. Acquiring freedom in small numbers at a time, they would easily fall into their natural places in society without tumult or disorder, and most of them undoubtedly become the hired laborers of their former masters.

It ought also to be borne in mind, that though the negroes in a state of slavery increase more rapidly than the whites, yet when freed, this disproportion would probably cease. The same moral causes which now check the multiplication of the whites, would then operate upon the blacks. The removal, too, of the free blacks from the country, might still be pursued with unabating and increasing zeal, and a better prospect of entire success. For whatever laws may be made with regard to this class of our population, every thinking mind must desire this removal should be complete.

Another argument, if it can be called so, in vindication of slavery, occasionally resorted to, though of late it has not been urged with so much confidence as it was formerly, is, that nature having created the blacks with minds and bodies inferior to the whites, and painted them with a dark color as a mark of disgrace, no doubt intended them for a state of servitude to their superiors as much as oxen and horses. But this alleged inferiority has never been established. It is impossible to say how much of the stupidity of the blacks is the effect of their situation and want of cultivation. The same opinion which is now prevalent with regard to them, was once the popular belief with regard to white slaves. It is true, however absurd it may appear to us, that slaves were generally believed by the ancients to be an inferior race of men, and naturally devoid of understanding; so hard is it to distinguish what portion of the power of the mind is native, and what acquired. But conceding that the intellectual faculties of the African race are not equal to those of the European; is it therefore just and humane, or even politic and expedient, to continue the present system of personal servitude? If slavery be in itself an evil, which

cannot be disputed, the mental inferiority of the blacks does not remedy it.

The ill success which the experiments of manumission have met with in the Southern States, is no argument against the plan suggested. It was to be expected that ignorant and degraded men, suddenly let loose from their chains, would become idle and dissolute, and a load upon society. Debased and brutified by the state in which they were brought up, they were totally unprepared for the change. They had no moral restraint to compensate for the physical one which had been removed. When but a small part of the attention devoted to the education of the whites, has been bestowed upon the blacks and proved to be utterly ineffectual in forming their characters, then, and not till then, may we begin to doubt the expediency of emancipation. It is not freedom, but ignorance and degradation which are dangerous to society. The same fears of enfranchising slaves seem always to have prevailed, and experience has always shown them to be fallacious. The ancients thought it dangerous. The Romans had laws to regulate and restrain manumission. In the middle ages, also, it was considered as detrimental to society ; and various laws were passed to prevent it. Yet slavery has disappeared from the greater part of Europe, and from the northern part of our own country, with no such evil consequences as were anticipated. However dangerous, therefore, a sudden emancipation of the whole colored population might be, and however undesirable enfranchisement in any manner might appear, while the present degraded character of the blacks continues ; yet, we may fairly conclude that a gradual liberation of the whole class might be effected, with the happiest consequences, provided the proper measures for their previous education should be sincerely adopted and sedulously pursued.

It can scarcely be doubted that it is for the interest of the Southern States to give freedom to their negroes, whenever it can be done with safety. I cannot within my limits refer to the many distinguished political economists, who hold that the labor of freemen is cheaper than that of slaves ; nor is it necessary to examine the facts in ancient and modern history on which they build their opinion. But the slightest consideration of the circumstances of the case, can scarcely fail to lead any unprejudiced mind to the same conclusion. The master has to pay for the support of the slave ; he has to provide him and his family with food, clothes, and lodging. It is true that

these are all cheap, and that a hired laborer in this country can with his wages, support himself and family more comfortably than the slave is supported. But will not the greater quantity of work done by the hired laborer, much more than pay the difference? Which will work best, the hired laborer, who knows his future employment depends on his present diligence, or the slave, who, if he does enough to avoid punishment, has no inducement to any greater exertion? It is impossible to ascertain exactly the comparative value of hired or voluntary, and forced labor; but all writers that I have examined, agree in preferring the former. Bryan Edwards, one of the ablest advocates of slavery, says that one Englishman will perform the work of three negroes; certainly not from superior strength. Other writers make similar statements. And we have it from the best authority, that slaves do as much work in one afternoon for themselves, as in a whole day for their masters. It is notorious that the work done by slaves in the West Indies and in our Southern States, is very small compared with that of hired servants in other countries.

Indeed, the conviction of the dearness of slave labor is becoming general among the planters themselves. This is perhaps the chief cause of the great desire to emancipate their slaves, exhibited by many persons in Virginia and Maryland. The following extract from a southern journal, presents a melancholy, though perhaps not an exaggerated picture of the condition of those States.

‘The motives for enfranchisement are every moment gaining power. Many a planter finds the whole income of an immense estate, absorbed by the subsistence of his slaves. He is unwilling to sell them, and their rapid increase threatens to prove the ruin of his fortune. Said a gentleman of this description to the writer, “I should be a rich man, if I had not a slave in the world.”’*

I have thus freely expressed my opinions as to the practicability of a gradual, but complete emancipation, and the mode of effecting it. But considering the views of the planters on this subject, the doubts which they may fairly entertain of the expediency of adopting any plan of the kind, the difficulty of arranging the details of a new system, and the still greater difficulty of carrying it into execution, it cannot reasonably be expected that the Southern States generally will at present enact any laws with this object expressly in view. It is there-

* *African Repository*, No. 6, p. 162.

fore more important to inquire what can and ought to be done to improve the condition of the negroes while in their present state of servitude. As it would be impossible within reasonable limits to present any detailed views, I shall content myself with a few remarks.

Though the Southern States are not to be reproached for the existence of slavery, nor for their doubts with regard to the expediency of emancipation, yet they have no excuse for the enactment of severe and cruel statutes, and the toleration of barbarous practices, manifestly not required to maintain the existing system. The most crying abuse is the traffic in slaves which they permit. Though they have consented to the abolition of the African branch of this commerce, they allow a slave trade between themselves, which is scarcely less inhuman. I shall say nothing of kidnapping free blacks, which this traffic encourages, and which the severe laws against it have not been able to prevent. It is notorious that large numbers of slaves are constantly carried from some of the older States, to supply the markets of the south and west. Now although it may be a very profitable business to raise slaves for exportation, and although it may be imagined by the exporting States that they are relieving themselves of their surplus population, yet the traffic itself is not the less disgraceful to the legislatures that permit it. The remedy of the evil is simple. Every State should pass an act to prevent the importation of any slaves, except such as belong to emigrants and come to settle with their masters. Such laws have been passed in some of the States, though not with any design of serving the blacks. But this measure does but half accomplish the purpose, and cannot be effectual unless all the States pass similar acts. This cannot be expected. But any State may completely effect the end, by passing a statute to prohibit the exportation of slaves. As Congress, however, seems to have the right to do this, it is to be hoped that with the cooperation of the southern members, some general law will be passed to remedy the evil. But if it should still be doubted, as it has formerly been, whether Congress have this right according to the Constitution, it would perhaps be unwise to act in opposition to the opinions and wishes of the bulk of the southern representation. Great Britain has set us a good example in correcting a similar abuse in the West Indies, a late statute having prohibited the transportation of slaves from one colony to another.

But without enacting laws having enfranchisement for their

direct object, much may be done to improve the state of enslaved blacks. It would be easy to point out many particulars in which the slave codes admit of great improvement. But I have only room to observe that the first principles of the system are unsound. The object of all the slave laws is to depress and degrade the character of the negro, on the plea that the safety of the masters requires the slave to be kept in ignorance. This may possibly be good policy, if the design be to perpetuate personal slavery forever and at all hazards. But if the wise and enlightened citizens of the south really wish to destroy the evil, their whole system must be changed. In whatever mode and at whatever time emancipation is attempted, the moral and intellectual culture of the blacks ought to precede and accompany it. While the Southern States, therefore, persist in legislating upon the false and pernicious principle that it is necessary to reduce a large part of their population as nearly as possible to the state of brutes, all hope of improving the negroes from the operation of the laws, is idle. All the statutes made to keep the blacks in ignorance and prevent their education, should be at once repealed, and others passed to provide for their instruction.*

The laws of some of the Southern States to restrain manumission, seem to us here to be very impolitic.† If any thing

* In illustration of the system of policy pursued at the south, I have extracted clauses from one or two statutes, which I believe are still in force. They need no commentary. A statute of Virginia provides that it shall not be lawful for any overseer binding out any black or mulatto orphan, 'to require the master or mistress to teach such orphan reading, writing, or arithmetic.'—*Stat. Jan. 31, 1805, 2 Virg. Laws, 85.* The following is from a statute of South Carolina. 'And whereas the having of slaves taught to write or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences: Be it enacted, That all and every person and persons whatever, who shall hereafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatever, hereafter taught to write; every such person and persons shall for every such offence, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds current money.'—*Stat. 1740, 2 Brev. Dig. 243.* The fine for teaching a slave to write is the same as for wilfully cutting out his tongue, or putting out his eye. A law similar to that last cited is in force in Georgia.—*Prince's Dig. Laws of Georgia, 455.*

† The following is the law of Virginia. 'If any slave hereafter emancipated shall remain within this commonwealth more than twelve months after his or her right to freedom shall have accrued, he or she shall forfeit all such right, and may be apprehended and sold by the overseers of the poor of any county or corporation, in which he or she shall be found, for the benefit of the poor of such county or corporation.'—*Stat. Vir. Jan. 25, 1806, 2 Virg. Laws, 97.* In North Carolina during the revolution a statute was enacted commencing as follows: 'Whereas the evil and pernicious practice of freeing slaves in this State, ought at this alarming and critical time to be guarded against by every friend and well-wisher of his country: Be it therefore enacted; That no negro

can have a tendency to make the slave restless and uneasy, it must be the knowledge that freedom from his master's gift is almost hopeless. We do not say that the legislatures of the Southern States are bound to encourage manumissions, but they might at least permit them under fewer restrictions. Slaves ought also to be legally invested with the power to purchase their own freedom. The industry and good conduct which would be required to effect this object, will fit them for the liberty they aspire to. The remarks of Mr Stephen on this subject have so much good sense and so much eloquence, that I cannot refrain from copying them.

'Such is the value of possible, but far more that of potential liberty, to the slave. What cruelty then can exceed the total privation of this hope; or even its wanton discouragement?

'But it is not more cruel than unwise. The hopes and fears of man are the pledges that he gives to society for his conduct. Without these, he cannot be stimulated to the discharge of social duties; or deterred from the most pernicious crimes. But the slave, if shut out from the chance of enfranchisement, has so little to hope or fear in this life, that no human sanctions can give him adequate motives for obedience to the government or the laws. He sees in the civil authorities, the abettors only of his master's despotism, and the rivets of his galling chain. In the same degree that he desires liberty, he must hate the government under which he lives; and can hope only in a revolution, the possible improvement of his state.

'It is true indeed that civil disaffection, and a dangerous propensity to revolt, are generally inseparable in some degree from the mischievous and odious institution of private slavery. The community that permits and maintains such a state, places under its own foundation a mine, the explosion of which is a calamity not less probable than just.

'But the danger is materially lessened by the frequency and facility of enfranchisement. Though that inestimable prize will be the lot comparatively of a few, the hope of future freedom will influence the many, and, what is of vast importance, will be the most influential with those who, being from their superior intelligence and energy the most likely to obtain it, are, from the

or mulatto slave shall hereafter be set free, except for meritorious services, to be adjudged of and allowed by the County Court, and license first had and obtained thereupon," &c.—*Laws of North Carolina, edition of 1821, Vol. 1, p. 270, passed in 1777.* This law was confirmed by a new act in 1796, and, by an act passed in 1818, the power given to the County Courts is exclusively vested in the Superior Courts.—*Laws of North Carolina, Vol. 2, pp. 801 and 1446.*

same causes, likely to give the lead to their comrades, in all cases, whether of obedient or mutinous conduct.

‘These principles, though selfevidently true, do not rest for their authority upon theory alone. They are confirmed by experience. The most hopeless slavery has always been the most dangerous to the state.

‘In England, where enfranchisement was the most copious and rapid, till liberty at length became universal, I recollect no instance on record of a servile insurrection. In the Spanish colonies, where it has been next in extent, such calamities, if they have ever occurred, have been extremely rare; and we have recently seen that all the efforts of infuriated parties have failed on the continent of South America to excite the slaves to revolt against their immediate masters; and that in Cuba, where they most abound, there has been a perfect internal calm, in spite of the hurricanes around them. In the colonies of Holland and Great Britain, on the contrary, where manumissions are the scarcest, insurrections have been peculiarly frequent.

‘But the most interesting view of individual enfranchisement is the tendency which it has to terminate, in the safest and happiest way, the cruel and odious institution out of which it grows. * * *

‘Though progressive meliorations by law of the condition and treatment of the servile class at large, certainly ought to be made, they are, it must be admitted, of rather difficult execution. * * *

‘The best mode of gradation consequently is that which progressively reduces the comparative number of the slaves, and increases proportionably that of the free population, by means of individual manumissions; though this happy progress should certainly be accompanied, and kept pace with, by meliorations of the state itself.

‘Here again history may be instructively consulted.

‘The reformation of the servile code of Rome, was attended with no civil disorders; because manumissions, through the benign influence of Christianity, became so copious soon after that reformation commenced, that the slaves speedily ceased to bear a dangerous proportion in number to the free citizens and libertines of the empire.’—pp. 375—377.

A law to annex plantation slaves to the soil, so that property in them should pass only with the land, would be a most beneficial provision. Such a law would not only prevent the cruelty of separating near connexions by sales, but do much to elevate the character of the slave, by protecting him, however slightly, from the tyranny and caprice of his master. It would besides introduce a species of feudal vassalage, in the place of a more

aggravated form of servitude.* It is this system, which has operated with other causes to eradicate slavery from the greater part of Europe, and would no doubt contribute slowly to produce the same effect in America. The adoption of a similar course has been strongly urged in England with regard to the British West Indies.

The separation of families, either in private or judicial sales, is an enormous abuse, which no consideration of interest can justify, and should at once be prohibited by law in every slaveholding State.

The exclusion of the blacks from being witnesses against the whites, is one of the most harsh and unreasonable provisions in the southern slave codes. Whatever may be the object of such provisions, whether it is merely to degrade the character of the blacks, or to exclude testimony which is considered unsatisfactory; the effect is to prevent the discovery of truth and impede the course of justice. What danger could be apprehended from making the black a witness, in all cases in which he would be competent if white? A jury surely may be safely left to judge of his credibility, as in other cases in which there is reason for doubting the truth of a witness.

There are many other particulars in the southern slave codes, which are open to serious animadversion, and seem capable of much improvement; I shall merely allude to some of them in a very cursory manner. The severity of the penal laws against the blacks, and the rigor of the slave police, ought to be diminished, and more efficient laws should be made for their protection. Slaves should be regarded in law as *persons*, not as *things*, and should have the rights of persons. They should be enabled to inherit and purchase property. The free blacks, too, ought to have all the civil rights and all the political privileges which it would be safe to grant them. In my opinion, the most wise as well as the most liberal course, would be to give them all the privileges of citizens, only requiring a certain amount of property as a requisite qualification. Under this restriction, there can be no danger that they can ever acquire any political power, unless they should become as industrious and intelligent as the remaining citizens.

Two objections are generally urged against all enactments for improving the condition of the blacks, even if they do not

* Annexing slaves to the soil is permitted by statute in Kentucky, and perhaps in other parts of the country. I cannot say to what extent it has been practised.

extend to enfranchisement; one is, that they necessarily tend to promote a gradual liberation of the whole class; the other, that such laws, by enlightening the minds of the slaves, render them dissatisfied with their situation, and more disposed to engage in insurrections, and more able to conduct them with success. It must be admitted as it respects the first objection, that if manumission is unrestrained and the character and condition of the slaves improved, there can be little doubt that a general liberation of the whole colored population will finally ensue. But nothing in my opinion can be more desirable than this gradual and quiet change. It cannot however be necessary here to reply to this objection, for the arguments already adduced in favor of a general enfranchisement by law, apply with equal, if not greater force to voluntary manumissions by individuals.

The same arguments will also apply to the other objection. History shows us, what we might expect, that slaves behave best where they are best treated. Men are not generally disposed to fight to raise themselves above the lot to which they are born; it is only the extremity of oppression and actual suffering which commonly drive them to violence. The resistance increases with the pressure. Will slaves be more likely to rebel, because they have increased security for their persons and property; because a disposition is shown to improve them; because they are treated with more humanity; because an addition is made to their comforts; because the law gives them the right to earn freedom by their own exertions; because, in fine, they have new motives given them for industry and good conduct? Strong evidence is required to prove this. Besides, admitting that an increase of knowledge would give the negroes a desire to rise against their masters; the same knowledge would inform them that all efforts of rebellion would be desperation, and that a general movement of the whole colored population must result in their ruin. They could not but see that the whites in the Southern States have organized governments, with a great majority of the population and all the resources of wealth, talent, and experience on their side; and that in addition to this overwhelming superiority, they could command the regular forces of the United States, and the militia of the north. A general insurrection of an extensive country or of any large district, seems scarcely possible, unless a great majority of the inhabitants join in it. A

partial rising of an exasperated multitude may happen any where and under any form of government. But would an increase of intelligence increase the danger of these sudden tumults among the blacks? Would it not rather show them the folly of all such efforts? The following statements from Mr Stephen, who has examined this subject thoroughly and profoundly, are worthy of attention.

'It is well worthy of remark, that these events [insurrections,] have occurred since the abolition, only in two British colonies, in both of which the religious instruction of the slaves had been preeminently neglected and discouraged, and where missionary labors had either been wholly wanting, or prosecuted on a scale too minute to have had any material effect on the character of the black population; while in colonies where the slaves have been extensively the objects of such labors, interior peace and security have prevailed without interruption, during the whole of this revolutionary age.' p. 243.

'The Spanish and Portuguese slaves are as well instructed in religion as their masters; but then it is a fact equally indisputable, that they are fed, clothed, and governed, with a degree of liberality and kindness, which, in other colonies, is utterly unknown. We have incidentally seen also, that the servile code is among them proportionably lenient and just, beyond that of the British islands. Christianity, then, is at least a safe inmate in West India settlements; since those of Spain and Portugal are preeminently tranquil, and exempt from interior convulsions.' p. 267.

I feel the more confidence in the opinions which have been expressed in the preceding pages, because they coincide in all important particulars with the measures which have been suggested in England with regard to the West Indies. There seems to be little hope, however, that any improvement in the condition of the negroes, will at present be effected by any measures which depend upon the State legislatures. But much, very much, may be accomplished by individual exertion. The unreasonable contempt which mere color inspires, as it is the chief cause of the bitterness of slavery, so is it the only serious obstacle to the emancipation and improvement of this proscribed caste. Once convince the whites of the absurdity and injustice of this contempt, and the whole fabric of slavery will vanish like a shadow. Perhaps it may seem visionary to expect that the free and enlightened whites of America, will ever regard the blacks as beings of the same species with them-

selves. Yet could we practically believe what we cannot in theory deny, that these unfortunate creatures are men and ~~not~~ brutes, that they are endowed with minds, which, if not equal to our own, are certainly capable of improvement; this alone would do more to elevate their character and condition than any laws that could be enacted. A change in the laws, to be effectual, must be the consequence of a change in public opinion. Men of rank and influence at the South, would therefore do well to examine calmly and dispassionately, if there be not something wrong in the prevailing feeling and sentiment on the subject of slavery; if the slave codes are not imperfect and capable of improvement; if the general enfranchisement of the colored population cannot be accomplished consistently with the general welfare of society and the rights of private property; and if the necessity of the continuance of the present system may not be questionable. A thorough examination of the whole subject might perhaps lead to conclusions which they do not anticipate.

The superiority of voluntary over forced labor is, as I have remarked above, sufficiently proved. But I ~~do not~~ conclude without adverting to the subject again. If any ~~one~~ were wanting to attest the fact, it might be found in the remarkable results of the plan pursued by Mr Steele. But as most readers of the Examiner must have seen the account of his experiments, it will not be necessary to detail them. He employed the slaves in his plantation in Barbadoes as free laborers, paying them in proportion to the work done by them, and abolished the severe and cruel discipline which has sometimes been considered necessary to compel the blacks to exertion. 'But,' in the words of the Edinburgh Review, 'it is an important as well as an agreeable circumstance, that he suffered no loss even of worldly gain, by the hazard he encountered for the good of mankind. He expressly describes his operation as having conducted to his profit.*' Similar plans have in other places met with equal success. The same course seems worthy of a trial in our own country. Any wealthy and publicspirited planter might, with very little inconvenience to himself, employ his slaves as free laborers, and agree to pay them according to their work. It can scarcely be doubted, that such an experiment, carefully conducted under the personal direction of the planter, would improve the character of the subjects of it, and be a source of profit to their master. The man who should try

* Edin. Rev. Oct. 1823. p. 133.

such an experiment, and publish the result, whether successful or unsuccessful, would do more for his country, by exhibiting the degree of improvement of which the negro race is susceptible, than if he should transport a thousand emigrants to Africa or Hayti. To insure the most beneficial results it is only necessary to place before the eyes of the planters a few estates cultivated solely by the voluntary labor of negroes. The example of a few individuals would be contagious. The conviction would soon become prevalent that the money paid to purchase human flesh and blood is worse than thrown away ; that the real value of a slave is less than nothing ; that he is a burden and not a profit to his owner. Many of the planters have shown a noble spirit in liberating and sending away their slaves. Let the same spirit direct them in making this experiment. In what more honorable or more delightful service can the most active and exalted philanthropy be employed ? If any experiments have been made in this country upon this plan I am ignorant of them ; but even if they have been tried and have proved unsuccessful, I cannot but believe that the ill success has arisen from some great want of judgment or from some circumstance entirely accidental. At all events the experiment deserves a thorough trial.*

I have thus adverted, in a very cursory manner, to a few of the topics connected with slavery. Many of them deserve a much more extended and thorough consideration. The evil to be remedied, though admitted to be great, is far from being desperate. If the citizens of the Southern States would keep their attention constantly and earnestly directed to the means of removing and alleviating it, rather than to the arguments in defence of it ; if they would but study what has been done elsewhere in the same cause, rather than take it for granted that nothing can be done, the best consequences could not fail to ensue. Nothing would be more effectual for this purpose, than a work which should give the history of slavery, and a plain comparative statement of the law and practice with regard to it in the several Southern States. Until such a work appears, there is perhaps none, which, either for the nature or amount of the information contained in it, can be consulted with more advantage than that of Mr Stephen.

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* Since the above was written, I have seen some notice in the newspapers of an experiment making by Miss Wright for employing negroes as voluntary laborers : but not enough to enable me to understand the plan which is pursued.

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Great Britain. Parliament (1823). House
of Commons **SUBSTANCE**

OF
THE DEBATE

IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 15TH MAY, 1823,

ON A MOTION FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS.

WITH
A PREFACE AND APPENDIXES,
CONTAINING FACTS AND REASONINGS ILLUSTRATIVE OF
COLONIAL BONDAGE.

LONDON:

Printed by Ellerton and Henderson, Gough Square;

FOR THE
SOCIETY FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS; London, Eng.

AND
SOLD BY J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY; AND
J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL.

1823.



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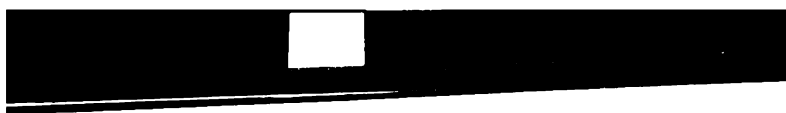
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P R E F A C E.

IT is thought right to prefix to the Substance of the Debate on Slavery a republication of the Prospectus and occasional Circular Letters of the “Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions.”

P R O S P E C T U S O F T H E S O C I E T Y .

(Published in March 1823.)

AMONG the manifold evils to which man is liable, there is not perhaps one more extensively productive of wretchedness than **PERSONAL SLAVERY**.

Slavery may, without exaggeration, be described as inflicting on the unhappy subjects of it almost every injury which law, even in its rudest state, was intended to prevent. Is property an object of solicitude? The Slave, generally speaking, can neither acquire nor securely enjoy it. Is exemption from personal wrong indispensable to comfort? The Slave is liable to indignity and insult, to restraint and punishment, at the mere caprice of another. He may be harassed and rendered miserable in a thousand ways which, so far from

admitting of the proof that would be requisite to obtain legal redress (even where any legal redress is ostensibly provided), can perhaps with difficulty be distinguished from such exercise of a master's power as admits of no regulation or controul. Even life itself may, with impunity, be wantonly sported with : it may be abridged by insufficient sustenance ; it may be wasted by excessive labour ; nay, it may be sacrificed by brutal violence, without any proportionate risk of adequate punishment.

In short, the Slave can have no security for property, comfort, or life ; because he himself is not *his own* : he belongs to another, who, with or without the offer of a reason or pretence, can at once separate all from him, and him from all which gives value to existence.

Again : What sense of moral obligation can he be expected to possess who is shackled with respect to every action and purpose, and is scarcely dealt with as an accountable being ? Will the man, for example, whose testimony is rejected with scorn, be solicitous to establish a character for veracity ? Will those who are treated as cattle, be taught thereby to restrain those natural appetites which they possess in common with their fellow-labourers in the team ? Or will women be prepared for the due performance of domestic and maternal duties by being refused the connubial tie, or by being led to regard prostitution to their owner, or his representative, as the most honourable distinction to which they can aspire ?

From this source of Slavery, then, flows every species of personal suffering and moral degradation, until its wretched victim is sunk almost to the level of the brute ; with this farther disadvantage, that, not being wholly irrational, he is capable of inspiring greater degrees of terror, resentment, and aversion, and will therefore seem to his owner to require and to justify severer measures of coercion.

And let it not be forgotten, that Slavery is itself not merely the effect, it is also the very cause, of the Slave Trade—of that system of fraud and violence by which Slaves are procured. If Slavery were extinct, the Slave Trade must cease. But while it is suffered to exist, that murderous traffic will still find a fatal incentive in the solicitude of the Slaveholder to supply the waste of life which his cupidity and cruelty have occasioned. Thus, in every point of view, is Slavery productive of the worst consequences to all the parties concerned. Besides all the direct and wide-wasting injuries which it inflicts on its immediate victims, it substitutes for the otherwise peaceful merchant a blood-thirsty pirate trading in human flesh ; and, by ministering to pride, avarice, and sensuality, by exciting the angry passions, and hardening the heart against the best feelings of our nature, it tends to convert the owner of Slaves into a merciless tyrant.

The Society, be it remembered, are not now endeavouring to rouse indignation against particular acts of extraordinary cruelty, or to hold up to

merited reprehension individuals notorious for their crimes. They are only exhibiting a just picture of the nature and obvious tendencies of Slavery itself, wheresoever and by whomsoever practised. They are very far from asserting, or supposing, that every one of the enormities to which they have alluded will be found to co-exist in all their horrors in every place where Slaves may be found ; but they know that in such places they have existed, at one time or other, in a greater or less degree ; that in many places they are even now in full and fearful force ; and that they are liable to be revived in all. Should this picture appear to some persons to be overcharged, they would refer them to the most decisive and unquestionable authorities. The felon Slave-trader, indeed, they consign to the laws of England, and to the recorded reprobation of Europe. But for the accuracy of their delineation of the wretchedness and degradation connected with the condition of Personal Slavery, (most willing as they are to admit the humanity of many of the owners of Slaves, and the praiseworthy efforts which some of them have made to mitigate, on their own estates, the evils of colonial bondage,) they appeal to ancient and to modern history, and to every traveller worthy of credit who has visited the regions where that condition of society prevails. Three thousand years ago, a heathen poet could tell us,

Jove fixed it certain, that whatever day
Makes man a Slave takes half his worth away.

And this might be shewn to be the concurrent testimony of all ages.

The enemies of Negro freedom, in our own age and country, were so sensible of this truth, that with great shrewdness they disputed the claim of the Negro race to be regarded as men. They doubtless felt with Montesquieu, that, if "Negroes were allowed to be men, a doubt might arise whether their masters could be Christians." This position, however, has been abandoned as untenable; and we may therefore indulge a sanguine hope of at length recovering for them the indubitable rights of humanity, so long and so cruelly withheld by the strong arm of oppression.

Some persons, however, may here be disposed to ask, how it is possible, if slavery is an evil so enormous as it has now been represented to be, that it should not only have been tolerated, but recognized and established as a legal condition of society, by so many polished and even Christian nations, up to this very day? The Society admit, that, to a humane and considerate mind, nothing can seem more extraordinary, than that this and other enormities, the removal of which lies obviously within the compass of human ability, should yet continue to torment mankind from age to age. But our past supineness in no degree weakens the obligation we are under to attempt their removal, when their real nature has been detected and exposed. Nor will the plea of prescription and antiquity, or of previous connivance, justify the

prolongation of practices which both religion and natural justice condemn as crimes. The African Slave Trade, with all the abominations accompanying its every stage, had been carried on for centuries, without attracting observation; and, even after it had excited the attention of a few benevolent individuals, it cost many a laborious effort and many a painful disappointment, before a conviction of its inherent turpitude and criminality became general, and its condemnation was sealed in this country. In the exultation produced by this victory, it was perhaps too readily believed that the Colonial Slavery, which had been fed by the Slave Trade, would, when all foreign supply was stopped, undergo a gradual, but rapid mitigation, until it had ceased to reproach our free institutions and our Christian profession, and was no longer known but as a foul blot in our past history. It was this hope, joined to a liberal confidence in the enlarged and benevolent purposes of the colonial proprietary, which prevented the immediate prosecution of such further parliamentary measures as should have at once placed the unhappy Slave under the protection of the law, and have prepared the way for his restoration to those sacred and inalienable rights of humanity of which he had been unjustly dispossessed. But if, as is the fact, these hopes have proved illusory, and have only served to render the disappointment more bitter and mortifying, shall the friends of the African race be now reproached for wait-

ing no longer, when the real ground of reproach is, that they should have waited so long? They place themselves then on the immoveable ground of Christian principle, while they invoke the interference of Parliament, and of the country at large, to effect the immediate mitigation, with a view to the gradual and final extinction, in all parts of the British Dominions, of a system which is at war with every principle of religion and morality, and outrages every benevolent feeling. And they entertain the fullest conviction that the same spirit of justice and humanity which has already achieved so signal a victory will again display itself in all its energy, nor relax its efforts until it shall have consummated its triumphs.

The *objects* of this Society cannot be more clearly and comprehensively defined than in the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted at its first meeting.

“ That the individuals composing the present meeting are deeply impressed with the magnitude and number of the evils attached to the system of Slavery which prevails in many of the Colonies of Great Britain ; a system which appears to them to be opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christianity, as well as repugnant to every dictate of natural humanity and justice.

“ That they long indulged a hope, that the great measure of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, for which an Act of the Legislature was passed in 1807, after a struggle of twenty years, would have

tended rapidly to the mitigation and gradual extinction of Negro bondage in the British Colonies ; but that in this hope they have been painfully disappointed ; and, after a lapse of sixteen years, they have still to deplore the almost undiminished prevalence of the very evils which it was one great object of the abolition to remedy.

“ That under these circumstances they feel themselves called upon, by the most binding considerations of their duty as Christians, by their best sympathies as men, and by their solicitude to maintain unimpaired the high reputation and the solid prosperity of their country, to exert themselves, in their separate and collective capacities, in furthering this most important object, and in endeavouring by all prudent and lawful means to mitigate, and eventually to abolish, the Slavery existing in our Colonial possessions.

“ That an Association be now formed, to be called ‘ The Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions ;’ and that a Subscription be entered into for that purpose.”

With respect to the *means* of carrying these objects into effect, they must, in some measure, depend on circumstances. For such as are more obvious, particularly the obtaining and diffusing of information, considerable funds will be required ; and it will therefore be necessary to promote subscriptions, not only in the metropolis, but in all parts of the kingdom.

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE NATURE AND EFFECTS
OF NEGRO SLAVERY, AS IT EXISTS IN THE
COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

(Published in April 1823.)

THE Committee of the Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, understanding that a strong and very general desire prevails, in all parts of the country, to be furnished with a compendious view of the nature and effects of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain, have thought it their duty to draw up and circulate the following Summary of information on that subject.

In the Colonies of Great Britain there are at this moment upwards of 800,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery.

These unhappy persons, whether young or old, male or female, are the absolute property of their master, who may sell or transfer them at his pleasure, and who may also regulate according to his discretion (within certain limits) the measure of their labour, their food, and their punishment.

Many of the Slaves are (and all may be) branded like cattle, by means of a hot iron, on the shoulder or other conspicuous part of the body, with the initials of their master's name; and thus bear about them, in indelible characters, the proof of their debased and servile state.

The Slaves, whether male or female, are driven to labour by the impulse of the cart-whip, for the sole benefit of their owners, from whom they receive no wages; and this labour is continued (with certain intermissions for breakfast and dinner), from morning to night, throughout the year.

In the season of crop, which lasts for four or five months of the year, their labour is protracted not only throughout the day, as at other times, but during either half the night, or the whole of every alternate night.

Besides being generally made to work under the lash, without wages, the Slaves are further obliged to labour for their own maintenance on that day which ought to be devoted to repose and religious instruction. And as that day is also their only market-day, it follows, that "Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to them," but is of necessity a day of worldly occupation, and much bodily exertion.

The colonial laws arm the master, or any one to whom he may delegate his authority, with a power to punish his slaves to a certain extent, without the intervention of the magistrate, and without any responsibility for the use of this tremendous discretion; and to that extent he may punish them for any offence, or for no offence. These discretionary punishments are usually inflicted on the naked body with the cart-whip, an instrument of dreadful severity, which cruelly lacerates the flesh of the sufferer. Even the un-

happy females are equally liable with the men to have their persons thus shamelessly exposed and barbarously tortured at the caprice of their master or overseer.

The Slaves being regarded in the eye of the law as mere chattels, they are liable to be seized in execution for their master's debts, and, without any regard to the family ties which may be broken by this oppressive and merciless process, to be sold by auction to the highest bidder, who may remove them to a distant part of the same colony, or even exile them to another colony.

Marriage, that blessing of civilized and even of savage life, is protected in the case of the Slaves by no legal sanction. It cannot be said to exist among them. Those, therefore, who live together as man and wife, are liable to be separated by the caprice of their master, or by sale for the satisfaction of his creditors.

The Slaves in general have little or no access to the means of Christian instruction.

The effect of the want of such instruction, as well as of the absence of any marriage tie, is, that the most unrestrained licentiousness, (exhibited in a degrading, disgusting, and depopulating promiscuous intercourse,) prevails almost universally among the Slaves; and is encouraged, no less universally, by the example of their superiors the Whites.

The evidence of Slaves is not admitted by the

Colonial Courts, in any civil or criminal case affecting a person of free condition. If a White man, therefore, perpetrates the most atrocious acts of barbarity, in the presence of Slaves only, the injured party is left without any means of legal redress.

In none of the Colonies of Great Britain have those legal facilities been afforded to the Slave, to purchase his own freedom, which have produced such extensively beneficial effects in the colonial possessions of Spain and Portugal; where the Slaves have been manumitted in large numbers, not only without injury, but with benefit to the master, and with decided advantage to the public peace and safety. On the contrary, in many of our colonies, even the voluntary manumission of Slaves by their master has been obstructed, and in some rendered nearly impossible, by large fines.

It is an universal principle of Colonial Law, that all Black or Coloured persons are presumed and taken to be Slaves, unless they can legally prove the contrary. The liberty therefore, even of free persons, is thus often greatly endangered, and sometimes lost. They are liable to be apprehended as run-away Slaves; and they are further liable, as such, to be sold into endless bondage, if they fail to do that which, though free, nay, though born perhaps in Great Britain itself, they may be unable to do,—namely, to establish the fact of their freedom by such evidence as the colonial laws require.

Let it be remembered also, that many thousand infants are annually born within the British dominions to no inheritance but that of the hapless, hopeless, servitude which has been described; and the general oppressiveness of which might be inferred from this striking and most opprobrious fact alone, that while in the United States of America the Slaves increase rapidly—so rapidly as to double their number in twenty years—there is, even now, in the British Colonies, no increase, but on the contrary a diminution of their numbers.

Such are some of the more prominent features of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain. Revolting as they are, they form only a part of those circumstances of wretchedness and degradation which might be pointed out as characterizing that unhappy state of being.

Confining, however, our view to the particulars which have been specified, every enlightened Christian, nay every reasonable man, must allow that it is a case which calls loudly for interference. Is it possible that any free-born Briton should contemplate such a state of things, without the liveliest emotions of shame and grief and indignation; or that, satisfied with the recollection of his own comforts, he should refuse to listen to the cry of the wretched Negro? These things being made known to us, we are bound, without hesitation or delay, to come forward and address our

earnest petitions to the Legislature, that a remedy may be applied to such enormous evils, and that our country may be delivered from the guilt of participating in a system so fraught with the grossest injustice and oppression to hundreds of thousands of our fellow-subjects.

It will hardly be alleged, that any man can have a RIGHT to retain his fellow-creatures in a state so miserable and degrading as has been described. And the absence of such RIGHT will be still more apparent, if we consider how these Slaves were originally obtained. They, or their parents, were the victims of the Slave Trade. They were obtained, not by any lawful means, or under any colourable pretext, but by the most undisguised rapine, and the most atrocious fraud. Torn from their homes and from every dear relation in life, barbarously manacled, driven like herds of cattle to the sea-shore, crowded into the pestilential holds of slave-ships, they were transported to our colonies and there sold into interminable bondage.

Great Britain, it is true, has abolished her African Slave Trade, and branded it as felony ; and it is impossible to reflect without exultation on that great act of national justice.

The grateful acknowledgments of the country are also due to the Government, for their persevering efforts to induce other nations to follow the same course, and thus to rescue Africa from the desolating effects of the Slave Trade. Those

efforts, though hitherto unattended with all the success they merit, it is hoped, will be strenuously and unremittingly continued, until that nefarious traffic shall be declared **PIRACY** by the concurrent voice of all nations.

When the *British Slave Trade* was abolished, a confident expectation was entertained that the certain result of that measure would be the rapid mitigation and final extinction of the colonial bondage which had sprung from it, and which in its principle is equally indefensible.

Sixteen years, however, have now elapsed since the *British Slave Trade* was abolished ; but, during that long period, what effectual steps have been taken, either in this country or in the colonies, for mitigating the rigours of *Negro* bondage, or for putting an end to a condition of society which so grievously outrages every feeling of humanity, while it violates every recognized principle both of the *British Constitution* and of the *Christian Religion*?

The *Government* and *Legislature* of this country have on various occasions, and in the most solemn and unequivocal terms, denounced the *Slave Trade* as immoral, inhuman, and unjust ; but the legal perpetuation of that state of slavery, which has been produced by it, is, surely, in its principle, no less immoral, inhuman, and unjust, than the trade itself.

Notwithstanding those solemn denunciations, thousands of children are still annually born

SLAVES within the British dominions, and upwards of 800,000 of our fellow-creatures (the victims of the Slave Trade, or descended from its victims) are still retained in the same state of brutal depression. They are still driven like cattle to their uncompensated toil by the impulse of the lash. They are still exposed to severe and arbitrary punishments. They are still bought and sold as merchandize. They are still denied the blessings of the marriage tie, and of the Christian Sabbath. And, in a variety of other respects, they continue to be an oppressed and degraded race, without any adequate participation in the civil privileges, or in the religious advantages, to which, as British subjects, they are unquestionably entitled.

Even if it were admitted, that inconvenience might have arisen from immediately relaxing the bonds of the actual victims of the Slave Trade, or of their adult descendants, yet no satisfactory reason can be assigned, why, since the abolition of that trade, the children of those whom we proclaimed to have been unjustly deprived of their liberty should continue to inherit the unhappy condition of their parents.

It is by no means intended to attribute the existence and continuance of this most opprobrious system to our Colonists exclusively. On the contrary, the guilt and shame arising from it belong in perhaps an equal degree to the People and Parliament of this country. But on that very account are we the more rigidly bound to lose no time in

investigating the state of colonial bondage, and in adopting such measures as shall bring it to the earliest termination which is compatible with the well-being of the parties who sustain its grievous yoke.

But, besides our paramount and indispensable obligations, on moral and religious grounds, to relieve our colonial bondsmen from the cruel and degrading state to which we have reduced them, and to remedy as far as we can the numberless wrongs of which we have been the criminal authors ; it is further due to the character of Great Britain, in the eyes of foreign nations, that we should act agreeably to the principles which, in our discussions with them relative to the African Slave Trade, we have professed to make the basis of our representations. It would be vain to expect that they should regard those professions as otherwise than insincere, or that they should defer to our representations, however urgent, if we exhibit in our own conduct the glaring inconsistency of sanctioning as legal, in our own dominions, practices of the very same nature, in effect, with those which we reprobate and denounce as immoral, inhuman, and unjust, when they occur on the coast of Africa.

It is therefore our clear and indisputable duty completely to reform our present colonial system, even if it should require a large pecuniary sacrifice to accomplish that object. But the proposed change, we believe, is prescribed to us, not more

by moral and religious principle than by the soundest views of political expediency. In the present advanced state of knowledge, it can no longer be a question that the labour of slaves is much less profitable than that of freemen, and that it can only be supported at a very heavy expense to the community at large. In proof of this, it will be sufficient to adduce the protecting duties and bounties afforded to the growers of sugar in the West Indies ; and without which they declare it would be impossible for them to continue its culture. Indeed, we are persuaded that no institution which is directly at variance with the will of the Supreme Governor of the Universe can prove a source of permanent advantage either to nations or individuals. And, in the present case, it might be clearly demonstrated, that the personal slavery which deforms the face of society in the British Colonies, and stains the British character, is as detrimental to the interests of the Slave Owner as it is cruel and oppressive to the Slave ; and that its abolition, instead of proving an injury to either, will prove an unspeakable benefit to both.

The Colonists say, that they shall sustain a great actual loss by the proposed change of system. If so, they will of course have an opportunity of preferring and establishing their claim to indemnity. But whatever the extent of that claim may be proved to be, it is obvious that it attaches not to the Negro bondsman, but to the British

nation. It would be repugnant to every idea of equity, if we were to discharge any debt we may owe to the Colonists, not from our own resources, but with the toil and sweat and blood of our African brethren.

But, in whatever degree it may be found necessary to indemnify the Colonists for any loss which may arise to them from the abolition of Negro Slavery; yet, *while that state of society continues unchanged*, there will be an insuperable objection in the mind of every conscientious individual to the adoption of any measures of pecuniary relief, by means of protecting duties or bounties on their produce, or otherwise; because it is obvious that such measures, however modified, would involve the people of this country in the farther guilt of upholding a system which, when the facts of the case are known, it is impossible not to feel to be utterly repugnant to the principles of justice and humanity, and to the whole spirit of Christianity.

In any event, it is hoped that this inomentous subject will be taken into the earliest consideration of Parliament, with the view of providing an effectual remedy for the evils of colopial bondage, and raising the unhappy subjects of it, from their present state of wretchedness and degradation, to the enjoyment of the blessings of civil freedom and religious light; and it appears the unquestionable duty of the friends of humanity, in all parts of the kingdom, to address their early and earnest petitions to the Legislature for that purpose.

The Committee subjoin a List of Publications containing important information on the general subject of Slavery—viz.

Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Negro Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies, 1784.

Debates on the Slave Trade, 1791, 1792, 1806, and 1807.

Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents, 1807.

Pinckard's Notes on the West Indies, 1815.

Collins's Professional Planter, 1804.

Dixon's Mitigation of Slavery, 1814.

Watson's Defence of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies, 1816.

Report of the African Institution on Reasons for a Registry of Slaves, 1815.

Review of the Colonial Registry Bills by the African Institution, 1820.

Sixteenth Annual Report of the African Institution, 1822.

Stephen's Letters to Wilberforce on the Registry of Slaves, 1816.

Cropper's Letters to Wilberforce, 1822.

Singleton's Report of the State of Sierra Leone, 1822.

Pamphleteer, No. XVI., containing Coster on the Amelioration of Slavery, 1816.

Wilberforce's Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire on behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies, 1823.

Negro Slavery, as it exists in the United States and in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica, 1823.

Cropper's Letter on the Injurious Effects of High Prices and the Beneficial Effects of Low Prices on the Condition of Slavery, 1823.

Hodgson's Letter to Say, on the comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour, 1823.

East and West India Sugar, 1823.

Proceedings in the House of Commons, on Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1822.

Declaration of the Objects of the Liverpool Society for Abolishing Slavery, 1823.

Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, with a View to their ultimate Emancipation; and on the Practicability, the Safety, and the Advantages of the latter Measure: by T. Clarkson, Esq. 1823.

A Review of some of the Arguments which are commonly advanced against Parliamentary Interference in Behalf of the Negro Slaves, with a Statement of Opinions which have been expressed on that Subject by many of our most distinguished Statesmen, including Earl Grey, Earl of Liverpool, Lord Grenville, Lord Dudley and Ward, Lord Melville, Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. &c. 1823.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

(Published in August 1823.)

THE Committee of the "Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions," have for some time been anxious to fulfil their promise of communicating to the Public a brief view of their progress and prospects, and such suggestions respecting the farther measures to be adopted as the state of their cause may seem to require. The delay which has occurred has, however, been unavoidable. They felt it to be necessary, before they made the promised communication, to ascertain, with as much precision as possible, the intentions of his Majesty's Government with respect to this most momentous subject.

The circulation of the Society's various publications appears to have produced a more extensive effect than could have been anticipated ; and although the Session of Parliament was already considerably advanced before the public attention was engaged, no fewer than about two hundred and thirty Petitions were spontaneously addressed to Parliament, from all parts of the country, praying for the mitigation and gradual extinction of Slavery ; and it is certain that the multiplication of similar Petitions was only prevented by the parliamentary discussion of the question which took place on the 15th of May.

On that day, Mr. Buxton made a Motion to the following effect,—

“ That the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion ; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Dominions, with as much expedition as may be consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.”

Had this motion been agreed to, it was the intention of Mr. Buxton, as he stated succinctly in his Speech, to follow it up, by moving for leave to bring in a Bill, or Bills, which should embrace the following specific objects—viz.

To remove all the existing obstructions to the manumission of Slaves;—

To cause the Slaves to cease to be chattels in the eye of the law ;—

To prevent their removal, *as Slaves*, from colony to colony, and, under certain modifications, their sale or transfer, except with the land to which they might be attached ;—

To abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday ; and to make that day a day of rest, as well as of religious worship and instruction ; and also to secure to the Slaves equivalent time in each week, in lieu of Sunday, and in addition to any time which independently of Sunday is now afforded them, for cultivating their provision grounds ;—

To protect the Slaves, by law, in the possession and transmission of the property they may thus, or in any other way, acquire ;—

To enable the Slave to purchase his freedom, by the

payment at once of a fair price for his redemption, or of a fifth part of that price at a time, in return for an additional day in the week to be employed for his own benefit:—

To make the testimony of Slaves available in Courts of Justice, both in civil and criminal cases ;—

To relieve all Negroes and Persons of Colour from the burden of legally proving their freedom, when brought into question, and to throw on the claimant of their persons the burden of legally proving his right to them ;—

To provide the means of religious instruction for the Black and Coloured population, and of Christian education for their children ;—

To institute marriage among the Slaves ; and to protect that state from violation, and from either forcible or voluntary disruption ;—

To put an end to the driving system ;—

To put an end also to the arbitrary punishment of Slaves, and to place their persons as well as property under the guardianship of the law ;—

To provide that all the children born after a certain day shall be free,—care being taken of their education and maintenance until they shall be capable of acting for themselves ;—

To provide that no Colonial Governor, Judge, Attorney-General, or Fiscal, shall be a possessor of Slaves, or shall have a direct and obvious reversionary interest in such property, or shall be the agent of the proprietors of Slaves.

Mr. CANNING, as the organ of his Majesty's Government, expressed his concurrence in the general object of putting an end, at some, though perhaps no very early, period, to Slavery through-

out the British Dominions. He abjured the idea of perpetual Slavery. He further expressed his concurrence in several of the specific measures by which it had been proposed to effect the general object. He objected, however, to the abstract form of Mr. Buxton's motion, and he proposed to substitute in its place the following Resolutions, which, at the close of the discussion, were unanimously adopted by the House—viz.

- " 1st. That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.
- " 2d. That, through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population ; such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.
- " 3d. That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein.
- " 4th. That these Resolutions be laid before his Majesty.

As these propositions embraced substantially the general object which was contemplated in the original Motion, there could be no hesitation on

the part of its supporters in acceding to their substitution. It was of the very highest importance that his Majesty's Government and Parliament should be concurrently and unanimously pledged to so unequivocal a declaration of the duty of effectually mitigating and eventually extinguishing the state of Colonial bondage; especially as that declaration, while it placed on record this invaluable principle, did not preclude the discussion either of any one of the specific measures of reform above enumerated, or of the means by which, with a view to the attainment of the general object, those measures might best be carried into effect.

The unqualified acquiescence of the West-Indian body in the Resolutions proposed by Mr. CANNING, made it still more desirable to accede to them. Even the advantage to be gained by carrying the original Motion on a division, had this been a matter of choice, was not to be compared with that which could not fail to arise from the unanimous adoption of propositions so unexceptionable in themselves, brought forward as they had been by his Majesty's Ministers, and not opposed by any West-Indian proprietor in Parliament.

There still remained, however, considerable difference of opinion, with respect both to the specific plans of reform which were called for, and to the means by which those plans should be accomplished.

On this last point, Mr. CANNING proposed that the Government should take the matter into their own hands. By this course, he conceived that whatever danger was to be apprehended from public, and perhaps angry, discussion, might be avoided, while the conflicting interests of the various parties concerned might be more easily conciliated. With respect to such of the Colonies as had no local Legislatures, and in which the Crown possessed the sole power of making laws, the action of the Government would, of course, be more free and unfettered. There they might legislate by an Order in Council, which would also serve as a model of legislation for the other Colonies. In the case of the latter, all that it was intended to do, in the first instance, was, to recommend the adoption of the proposed reform to the Colonial Legislatures, whose full and fair co-operation, however, Parliament, he said, had a right to expect ; but, if an unlooked-for spirit of resistance should manifest itself, his Majesty's Government would then resort to Parliament for counsel.

In specifying the measures which his Majesty's Government have signified their intention of adopting, the Committee will not confine the specification to what actually fell from Mr. CANNING during the debate on Mr. BUXTON's motion. Subsequent communications have enabled them to modify the statement then made, so as to present, if not a particular and detailed, yet a

clear general view of the present purposes of his Majesty's Government. They are as follow:—

That the existing obstructions to manumissions, arising from stamps or fines, or other fiscal regulations, shall be removed;—

That the Slaves shall be protected by law in the possession, and also in the transmission, by bequest or otherwise, of any property they may acquire;—

That means shall be provided of religious instruction for the Slaves, and of Christian education for their children;—

That the driving system shall be peremptorily and entirely abolished, so that the whip shall no longer be the stimulant of labour;—

That an end shall also be absolutely put to the degrading corporal punishment of females; and that measures shall be taken to restrain, generally, the power of arbitrary punishment, and to prevent its abuse;—

That, the means of religious instruction being provided, the Sundays shall be given up to the Slaves for rest, recreation, and religious instruction and worship (Sunday markets being abolished); and that equivalent time shall be allowed them, on other days, for the cultivation of their provision grounds;—

That the marriage of Slaves shall be authorised, and sanctioned by law; and that they shall likewise be protected in the enjoyment of their connubial rights.

In respect to the proposal of causing the Slaves to cease from being mere chattels, and attaching them, under certain modifications, to

the soil, it was said, that whatever reform of this kind was introduced must be prospective only, as its retrospective operation might disturb the present tenure of property, and take away, in many cases, the only security on which money had been advanced. The question was therefore reserved for further consideration.

The admission of the testimony of Slaves in Courts of Justice was also thought to be beset with so many difficulties as to require a more deliberate investigation. At the same time, Government professed themselves friendly to the principle of admitting the testimony of Slaves, subject only to such modifications as the interests of justice might for a time require.

The propriety of relieving Negroes and Persons of Colour from the operation of that unjust principle of Colonial law which subjects them to be dealt with as Slaves, unless they shall be able by legal proof to establish their right to freedom, was admitted; and it was signified that further inquiry should be made as to the means for granting them the requisite relief.

It was also admitted to be desirable that no Governor, Judge, Attorney-General, or Fiscal, nor any of the religious instructors about to be appointed, should hold property in Slaves; and though it might be unfair to give to this principle a retro-active effect, yet that there could be no objection to its being made to operate prospectively.

The only remaining points were, the granting of facilities to the adult Slaves to purchase their freedom ; and the liberation from bondage of all children born after a certain day. In neither of these propositions have the Government hitherto signified their concurrence. Indeed, to the measure of freeing all children born after a certain day, they appeared to feel a more decided objection than to any other that had been suggested. Both the points were deemed of so much moment as to render further information and more mature consideration necessary, before they came to a final decision upon them.

In reviewing the Resolutions adopted by Parliament, and the declared intentions of his Majesty's Government, the Committee see very abundant cause of congratulation. They feel much gratified both by the admissions which they involve ; and by the concurrent determination, which has been expressed by his Majesty's Government and by Parliament, to proceed to the immediate redress of some of the existing evils, and to secure eventually the extinction of the very state of slavery.

Still the Committee deeply regret that the mode of proceeding by Parliamentary enactment, in effecting the Colonial reforms which have been recognised as necessary, should not have been preferred to that of leaving this great work to be carried on through the medium of the Colonial

Legislatures. Past experience, to say the least, discourages any sanguine hope of their prompt, cordial, and efficient co-operation ; and the Committee, therefore, lay their account in meeting with much delay and disappointment, as the consequence of this arrangement.

But, besides this disadvantage, it must be recollected that there are some points, of great and vital moment, on which no distinct hope of reform has as yet been given. It has not been declared that Slaves shall cease to be chattels ; that they shall no longer continue, in this respect, as well as for every other purpose of sale or transfer, on the same degrading level with the beasts of the field. They are still liable to be transported, as the master's interest or caprice may dictate, from one Island to another, and separated for ever from their families and dearest connexions, and from their native home. It has not yet been settled, that their testimony shall be received in Courts of Law, although without this the value of many other provisions in their favour must be greatly diminished. No expectation has yet been given that they shall enjoy facilities for obtaining their freedom by their own exertions. And, above all, their progeny are still doomed to be born to the same wretched inheritance with their parents, notwithstanding the undeniable injustice and cruelty of such a destination. And with respect to the points on which a more favourable decision has been signified, they are yet to be fulfilled, and that in

the face, it is to be feared, of many unappreciated difficulties.

Let not, therefore, the friends of our enslaved fellow-subjects assume that their work is accomplished. In fact, it is only begun. We are only entering on the field of our labours. We have made, it is true, a fair and hopeful commencement. The influence of the public feeling which has been so remarkably displayed, has effected much. But the ground we have already gained may be lost ; and, still more, our farther progress may be delayed, or even wholly obstructed, if we should remit our efforts. Nothing which has occurred ought to have the effect of relaxing, in the very slightest degree, our vigilance and activity. On the contrary, the success already obtained should only stimulate us to increased exertion ; for whatever measures, with a view to the ultimate attainment of our objects, were previously deemed necessary, may be considered as no less imperiously called for at the present moment.

In this persuasion, the Committee would particularly recommend that ASSOCIATIONS should be formed in every part of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of co-operating to diffuse information, to procure the requisite funds, and to call forth the distinct expression of public opinion on the subject.

The Committee feel that their cause owes much to those petitioners who, in the last session, addressed Parliament with such promptitude and

effect. They trust that the same earnest pleadings will be renewed at an early period of the next session. They trust that, not only from the same places which have already raised their voice in the sacred cause of justice and humanity, but from every county and every town in the United Kingdom, one energetic and concurrent appeal will be made to both Houses of the Legislature, in behalf of our enslaved fellow-subjects ; praying that they may be admitted, at the earliest safe and practicable period, to a participation in those civil rights and privileges, and in those moral and religious blessings, which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects : and that this nation may not be permitted to incur the farther guilt (now that our eyes are opened to the flagrant iniquity of such a course of conduct) of daily augmenting the miserable victims of an unjust and merciless policy, by subjecting the Children, who may hereafter be born, to the same state of abject and degrading bondage to which we have been the criminal instruments of reducing their progenitors.

To activity, vigilance, and perseverance in this course, there are the strongest motives to animate us which can call forth the exertions of Britons and of Christians. We have the cheering hope of being instrumental in rescuing upwards of Eight Hundred Thousand of our fellow-subjects from a state of Slavery which outrages every feeling of humanity, which violates every principle of the

British Constitution, and is repugnant to the whole spirit of the Christian Religion. And, still more, we may indulge the hope of contributing to deliver them from that more fatal bondage,—that yoke of ignorance, vice, and irreligion,—beneath which our institutions have continued so long to retain them. May these considerations operate on every mind with an energy which no delay or disappointment can enfeeble, and which no difficulties or opposition shall be able to resist; and, with the blessing of God upon our zealous, united, and unintermitted efforts, we may look forward to the not very distant time when we shall be called to rejoice together in the final accomplishment of our work of mercy.

18 Aldermanbury, 12th August, 1823.

*Petitions presented to the House of Commons for the
Abolition of Negro Slavery.*

Alfreton.	Associate Congregations of
Allenby.	Linlithgow.
Amphill.	Mid-Calder.
Andover.	Muckhart.
Appleby.	Peebles.
Ashburne.	Selkirk.
Ashley.	Associate Synod of the Secession.
Associate Congregations of	Attelboro'.
Alnwick.	Baldock.
Anthillet.	Ballitore, Kildare.
Auchtermuchty.	Banbury.
Biggar.	Barnard Castle.
Braehead.	Bath.
Cambusnethan.	Bawtry.
Carnwath.	Beccles.
Crail.	Bedwellty.
Cupar.	Belfont.
Dundee.	Belper.
Edinburgh.	Bergholt, East.

Birmingham.
 Blyth, Northumberland.
 Bolton, Great and Little.
 Bootle, Cumberland.
 Bradford, Yorkshire.
 Brandon.
 Braintree and Bocking.
 Brechin, N. B.
 Bridgenorth.
 Bridgerule.
 Bridgewater.
 Bridport.
 Brigham.
 Bristol.
 Brosely.
 Broughton, Great and Little.
 Burslem.
 Bury St. Edmunds.
 Cambridge, University.
 Cambridge, Town.
 Calne.
 Cardiff.
 Carlisle.
 Carmarthen.
 Castle Dorrington.
 Cavill and Walls-End.
 Charlbury.
 Chatteris.
 Chelmsford.
 Cheltenham.
 Chester.
 Chesterfield.
 Chester-le-Street.
 Chipping Norton.
 Cocker mouth.
 Coggeshall and Kelvedon.
 Coggeshall.
 Colchester.
 Coventry.
 Crickhowel.
 Cromer.
 Darlington.
 Derby.
 Diss.
 Dover.
 Dudley.
 Dumfries, N. B.
 Dnnmow.

Durham.
 Eaglesfield.
 East Dereham.
 Eccleshall.
 Evesham.
 Exeter.
 Eye.
 Falmouth.
 Farringdon.
 Framlingham.
 Frome-Selwood.
 Gainsborough.
 Gateshead.
 Giggleswick.
 Gloucester.
 Gosforth.
 Greysouthern.
 Griningham.
 Hackney.
 Hadleigh.
 Halesworth.
 Halstead.
 Hanley and Sheldon.
 Harling, East.
 Harrington.
 Hensingham.
 Hertford, County.
 Hexham.
 Hinckley.
 Hitchin.
 Hoden, and adjacent parts of
 Holderness.
 Horsham.
 Huddersfield.
 Hull.
 Huntingdon.
 Inverkeithing.
 Ipswich.
 Kendal.
 Kenninghall.
 Knaresborough.
 Lanark, N. B.
 Lancaster.
 Leeds.
 Leicester.
 Leominster.
 Lilliesleaf.
 Liskeard.

Liverpool.	Scarborough.
Llangattock.	Shaftesbury.
Longlow.	Sheffield.
Loughborough.	Sherborne.
Lutterworth.	Shiffnall.
Madelay.	Shoreditch, Parish of.
Maer Maxton.	Society of Friends.
Maldon.	Southwark.
Malton.	South Shields.
Manchester and Salford.	Stafford, County of.
Manningtree.	Staindrop.
Mansfield, Nottingham.	Staines.
Market Drayton.	Standon.
Maryport.	Stockton.
Matlock.	Stoke-upon-Trent.
Mutford and Lothingland.	Stone.
Nantwich.	Stonehouse.
Neath.	Stow Market.
Needham Market.	Stroud.
Nether Wadsdale.	Sudbury.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.	Sunderland.
Newcastle-under-Line.	Swansea.
Norfolk, County of.	Tewkesbury.
Norwich.	Thetford.
North Walsham.	Truro.
Nottingham.	Tynemouth.
Olney, Bucks.	Uttexeter.
Ovingham.	Uxbridge.
Pakefield and Kirkley.	Wakefield.
Pembroke, County of.	Walthamstow.
Penrith.	Warrington.
Plymouth.	Wells next the Sea.
Pontefract.	Wellington, Salop.
Poole.	Westoe.
* Portsea Philalethan Society.	Whitehaven.
Preston.	Wickham Market.
Pyworth.	Wigton, Cumberland.
Rawden.	Wirksworth.
Retford.	Witham.
Rochdale.	Woodbridge.
Rochester and Chatham.	Worcester.
Rossendale.	Workington.
Rowinglass, Cumberland.	Wymondham.
Royston.	Yarmouth, Great.
Saffron Walden.	Yarrow, Durham.
Salisbury.	Yeovil.
Salop, County of.	York.

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TO THE FUNDS OF THE

Society for mitigating and abolishing Slavery

WILL BE RECEIVED

- By the* **TREASURER**, at *Messrs. Hoare and Co.'s, Bankers, 62 Lombard Street ;*
— *the* **SECRETARY**, 18 *Aldermanbury* (to whom Communications may be addressed);
— *the* **Members of the COMMITTEE** ;
— *Messrs. HATCHARD, 187 Piccadilly, and Messrs. ARCH, Cornhill, Booksellers to the Society ;*
— *Messrs. HOARE, Bankers, Fleet Street ;*
— *Sir P. POLE and Co., Bankers, Bartholomew Lane ; and*
— *Messrs. DRUMMOND, Bankers, Charing Cross.*

SUBSTANCE,

&c. &c.

MR. FOWELL BUXTON rose, and addressed the House nearly as follows.—

Sir—I feel so sure, that every gentleman is prepared to ask me one obvious question, that I cannot do better than save the time and curiosity of the House, by affording that question an immediate answer. The question which, as I suppose, gentlemen are anxious to put, is—Why do you move in this question? What right have you to interfere in this great cause? Is there not in the House, and even by your side, a man to whom, when a motion on slavery is to be made, all eyes naturally turn; a man who now, for a period very little short of forty years, has been the faithful, indefatigable, eloquent, and, upon one great occasion, the victorious advocate for the Negro? I hope there is no one, who deems so meanly, and I will say so unjustly, of me, as to suppose that I encroach uninvited on the province of my honourable friend. It is in compliance with the earnest request, it is in obedience to the positive injunction of him whom I honour as the father of the cause, and who, no matter who may introduce the subject, must ever be recognized as its truest and best advocate. It is at his express bidding that I now rise.

Before, however, I enter on the important, and, as some gentlemen deem it, the very perilous question of which I have given notice, I feel myself called upon to advert to the advice which I have received, and to the

warnings with which I have been favoured, of dreadful evils likely to be produced in the West Indies by the agitation of this subject. It is no slight matter, I have been told—and I admit it—to agitate the question at all. It is no slight matter to excite apprehensions, even the most groundless, in the minds of persons so respectable as those who signed the petition which has just been presented by the honourable Member for Taunton. I can truly say, that I feel no degree of animosity, I harbour no species of prejudice, either against the whole body, or against any individual of the body of persons connected with the West Indies. I consider them as eminently unfortunate, particularly the hereditary proprietors, in this, that their predecessors were tempted to embark their property in a species of investment which, at that time, was considered to be moral and consistent with justice; but which, when the subject has been thoroughly sifted, is found to be irreconcilable with the principles of justice and humanity. With these feelings towards the West Indians, deeming them rather unfortunate than culpable, I do consider it no slight matter to introduce any motion painful to their feelings.

It is no slight matter to drag into public view before the nation, and before surrounding nations, jealous of the reputation of this country, the worst, perhaps the only capital stain, on British policy; at a moment, too, when we have felt so keenly, and expressed ourselves so warmly, and all but incurred the hazards of war for the sake of a Nation threatened with political servitude: it is, I say, no slight matter to divulge the fact, that, of British subjects, there are one million living in personal slavery;—not Spaniards, but our own fellow-subjects; not threatened with but enduring, not political interference, but personal slavery,—“personal slavery, in comparison of which,” said Mr. Fox, “political slavery, much as I hate it, is a bare metaphor.”

I have heard much privately—and the House has heard somewhat publicly—of the responsibility which I incur

by the agitation of this question. And I admit, that a man ought to be pretty sure that his cause is good, as I am; and not only that the cause is good, but that the time is discreetly chosen, as I am; and that he is free from all personal considerations and prejudices, as I am; before he ventures to reject such advice, and to incur such responsibility. Why, then, do I incur that responsibility? First, because I am quite sure that the dangers, if not absolutely groundless, if not utterly imaginary, as I believe they are, have been much over-rated: and, secondly, because I am sure, that it is impossible to over-rate the real and substantial blessings that will accrue to a million of men, by the agitation of this subject in this House. I have not a notion that slavery can endure investigation. It must perish, when once brought under the public eye. And I feel confident that a few minutes ago, we commenced that process which will conclude, though not speedily, in the extinction of slavery throughout the whole of the British dominions.

The good, then, to be obtained is incalculable. Now let us consider, for a moment, the price we are to pay for it. We have heard a good deal of late of the danger of insurrection in the West Indies. If this were the first time that slavery had ever been mentioned in this House; if I were the first rash man who had ever ventured to commiserate the condition of the Negroes, perhaps there might be something alarming in the allegations of danger. But, it does so happen, that this same subject of slavery, and that infinitely more delicate subject of emancipation from slavery, to name which in this House, said the honourable Member for Taunton, is to shed blood in the West Indies, have been debated again and again and again within these walls. It does so happen, that a Committee of this House sat some thirty years ago, took evidence on this subject, and, what was unusual then, published it to the world. A Committee of the House of Lords did the same. A Committee of the Privy Council did the same. And it does so happen, that during those

thirty years, every man of distinction in this House, without exception, has put forth his opinions on these subjects: not only the men professing to be the most eager for liberty, and who therefore might be supposed to overlook all dangers in pursuit of their favourite object—such men as Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Whitbread, and Sir Samuel Romilly—but the very opposite of these in every point, except in point of talents; men, whose whole strength was opposed to the pursuit of ideal good, at the expense of present danger. When such men as Mr. Burke, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Windham, and my Lord Grenville: when such men as these unreservedly and repeatedly avowed their sentiments on the condition of the Slave; when they saw no danger in the avowal; when, of these cautious men the most cautious, Mr. Dundas, and the least addicted to change, Mr. Burke, each of them prepared, and one of them introduced into Parliament, a bill for the emancipation of the Negroes, which, if it had passed, would have been in operation three-and-twenty years ago, and would have liberated, by this time, half the Slaves in the West Indies;—when, I say, these men thus thought, spoke, and acted; when they did so, in despite of those very arguments, and, as I will presently shew, in defiance of those very warnings which have been offered to the House this night, I should feel that I betrayed a good cause if I suffered myself to be intimidated by any such extravagant apprehensions, or amused from my purpose by predictions which the fact, hitherto, has never failed to falsify.

It is at least a singular fact, that no motion was ever made in this House, on the subject of Negro Slavery, which has not been met with just the same predictions. No matter what the motion was; it was always attended with the same predictions in almost the same language.

In the year 1787, a very feeble attempt was made to abate the horrors of the Middle Passage—to admit a little more air into the suffocating and pestilent holds of the

Slave-ships. The alarm was instantly taken. The cry of the West-Indians, as we have heard it to-night, was the cry of that day. An insurrection of all the Blacks—the massacre of all the Whites—was to be the inevitable consequence. In the House of Lords, a man of no mean consideration in point of rank, the Duke of Chandos, besought their lordships not to meddle with this alarming question. He might, he said, pretend to know a little more of the subject than their lordships—that his pockets were filled with letters from his correspondents in the West Indies, who declared, that the English newspapers were read by the Negroes as regularly as the ships brought them; and that, so soon as they had come to the paragraph announcing that their lordships had thought it fit to lessen the sufferings of the Middle Passage, they would burst out into open rebellion! The bill passed, however; and, somehow or other, the prediction was not verified. About the same year, my honourable friend commenced that career with which his name will always be coupled; and which he brought to a glorious termination twenty years afterwards. Let any gentleman look to the proceedings in any one of those twenty years, and he will find three things:—First, an effort made by my honourable friend on behalf of the Negro: next, on the part of the West-Indians, a prediction of insurrection amongst the Blacks: and, thirdly, that prediction contradicted by the events of the year. Not only was each separate prophecy falsified by the fact; but, it is really remarkable to observe, if you place the whole train of prophecy on the one side, and the whole train of events on the other, how fully the latter refutes and overturns the former. Those twenty years, which, if the West-Indians are true prophets, ought to have been marked with perpetual violence, bloodshed, and desolation, were, in point of fact, remarkable for a degree of tranquillity in the British West-Indies, unexampled in any other period of their history.

Again: at that time, this country was so greedy of the gains of Slave-trading, that she not only supplied her own

colonies with Slaves, but became the carrier of other nations. My honourable friend, with his usual vigilance, discovered this ; and introduced a bill to stop the practice. The cry of danger was revived. " If you stop that trade," said, in this House, the agent of one of the West-India Islands, " you will occasion an insurrection of all the Blacks. You will cause the murder of all the Whites." But this—perhaps the fiftieth prediction of the same kind—was utterly falsified by the fact. Our Negroes actually did not rebel, because we ceased to supply rival colonies with Slaves.

In the year 1802, Lord Seaforth discovered a series of the most horrid and shocking murders that have ever been brought to light. I will not vex the feelings of the House, by detailing the barbarous particulars. But many honourable gentlemen will, no doubt, remember them—particularly the fact of the boy, who was killed in the gully. In short, never were there greater cruelties, than those perpetrated at that time in Barbadoes, by White men upon Black. (See Appendix A.) Some persons were brought to trial ; convicted upon the clearest evidence ; and punished with all the rigour of the law. And—what was all the rigour of the law ? A fine, somewhat less than we, in this country, impose upon a man for killing a partridge : eleven pounds, four shillings, was the fine for these detestable murders. The Governor proposed to the Legislature of the Island, that murder should be made a capital offence. The answer was precisely the same, as that contained in the petition laid upon the table this evening—" It will cause a rebellion." The Negroes, no doubt, would have been so shocked at the possibility of a White man suffering death, merely for killing one of themselves, that they would have taken to arms !

I will only notice one other prediction of the same kind. In 1817, little more than five years ago, Governor Maxwell stated, in a letter to Lord Bathurst, that " many acts of undue and unlawful severity towards the Slaves had come to his knowledge, and particularly some cases

where iron collars and chains had been added to their punishment, after they had undergone a severe whipping." He then states the following cases :—

Cases of Negroes, who were brought to Governor Maxwell in Chains, in which they were obliged to work, by their Owners or Managers, during the last three Months :

" 1st, A boy, about fifteen years of age : a large iron chain round his neck, fastened with a padlock, total weighing 22 lbs.

" 2d, Two girls, of twelve years of age, much marked by [the effects of the cart-whip ; fastened together with iron chains round their necks, padlocked, weighing 18 lbs.

" 3d, A full grown man, after a severe flogging with the cart-whip, loaded with an iron collar and chains, weighing 21 lbs.

" 4th, An old man, apparently sixty years of age, after having been severely beaten by his master, was placed in the stocks, with an iron collar round his neck, and chains, weighing 20 lbs.

" 5th, A boy, about twelve years of age, loaded with an iron collar, chains, and log of wood, weighing 26 lbs."

What was the effect of the discovery of this abuse ? The effect was, that the Grand Jury of Dominica, who met a few days afterwards, presented their Governor as a nuisance. Here is the Presentment—

Copy of Presentment of Grand Jury of Dominica, dated 26th August, 1817.

" The Grand Jury of our Sovereign Lord the King do present : first, That they find the gaol in the same state as in February last, notwithstanding the repeated presentments of former Grand Juries : secondly, The Grand Jury lament, that they are under the necessity of noticing an improper interference, on the part of the Executive, between Master and Slave, which has caused con-

siderable agitation and discontent amongst the Negroes, and, if persevered in, is likely to lead to the most ruinous consequences."

Now, Sir, if the Grand Jury had said, that these whippings, and "iron torments," as the Governor calls them, had produced agitation amongst the Blacks, and that the interference of the Governor had produced dissatisfaction among the Whites, the Presentment would have been very intelligible. But, when they say—and in such a formal manner too—that the Slaves would be dissatisfied at the interference of the Governor, which was intended for their protection,—as if they felt themselves, as of right, entitled to be flogged, chained, ironed, and padlocked; and as if they were so tenacious of this, their precious right, that they would burst into rebellion, if any symptom were shewn of a disposition to rob them of it;—this is really a little too much for English ears!

Precisely parallel, however, to this is the argument against me. I interfere, it is true. I shall offer suggestions, tending to improve the condition of the Negroes. But, I should be glad to know which of these is likely to produce agitation and discontent amongst them. One of our first propositions is, That the Slave shall have Sunday for rest and religious instruction; and that another day in the week shall be allowed him for the cultivation of his provision ground. Is there any thing irritating in this?—Next, we say, That all Negro children, born after a certain day, ought to be free—free from their birth—never subjected to be bought and sold, and whipped, and brutalized. Surely, such a provision will be far from producing discontent! I am informed, on what I consider the best authority—that of a person intimately acquainted with the feelings of the Negro population,—that he knows of no bond, so likely to secure their fidelity, as benefits conferred on their children—the advantages of education—and freedom.—Next, we propose to get rid of the cart-whip. Will the Negro be offended at that? Is he so fondly

attached to the cart-whip, that, in order to secure the continuance of its use, he will rise in rebellion? In point of fact, all we propose to do is this—to ameliorate the condition of the Negro—to give him something like the protection of British law—to reduce, not so much the power, as the possible abuse of power, in the master—and, above all, to rescue his children from that terrible condition, of which he well knows the bitterness. And, what is there in all this, calculated to rouse the furious passions of the Negro? On the contrary, I am fully persuaded, that security is to be found—and is only to be found—in justice towards that oppressed people. If we wish to preserve the West Indies—if we wish to avoid a dreadful convulsion—it must be by restoring to the injured race, those rights which we have too long withheld.

I must notice one point requiring consideration, both from the West-Indians and from the members of his Majesty's Government: I mean the great change which has taken place, during the last twenty or thirty years. What does the Negro, working under the lash, on the mountains of Jamaica see? He sees another island, on which every labourer is free; in which eight hundred thousand Blacks, men, women, and children, exercise all the rights, and enjoy all the blessings—and they are innumerable and incalculable—which freedom gives. Hitherto, indeed, no attempt has been made, from that quarter. The late Emperor Christophe, and the President Boyer, may have been moderate men; or they may have found at home sufficient employment. But, who will venture to secure us against the ambition of their successors? It would be singular enough, if the only Emperor who did not feel a desire to meddle with the affairs of his neighbours should be the Emperor of Hayti. I touch lightly upon this subject. Let Government—let the West Indians—justly appreciate the danger with which they may be menaced from that quarter. It is a danger, however, which is aggravated, by all the hardships you inflict upon the

Slave, and is abated exactly in proportion as you abate the misery of his lot.

Look at America. She may send at her own leisure, and from the adjacent shore, an army to Jamaica, proclaiming freedom to all the Slaves. And—what is worse still—she may do so in exact conformity to our own example; not only in the first American war, but in the recent contest of 1813. Surely there is a lesson in this. And what is the lesson it teaches? That we ought to grind down the Negro, until almost any change will be for the better—or that we shall upraise him in the scale of being, till almost any change will be for the worse? Mr. Pitt declared, that “it was impossible to increase the happiness, or enlarge the freedom, of the Negro, without, in an equal degree, adding to the security of the colonies, and of all their inhabitants.”

I do not mean to say, that there are not very great perils connected with the present state of the West Indies. On the contrary, I am quite sure—as sure as it is possible for any man in the House or in the country to be—that there is imminent peril at the present moment; and that that peril will increase, unless our system be altered. For I know, wherever there is oppression, there is danger—wherever there is Slavery, there must be great danger—danger, in proportion to the degree of suffering. But the question is, how that danger can be avoided. I answer, that it is to be avoided by that spirit of humanity which has avoided it in other places—by doing justice to those whom we now oppress—by giving liberty for slavery, happiness for misery. But even supposing the danger of giving to be as great as the danger of withholding; there may be danger in moving, and danger in standing still—danger in proceeding, and danger in doing nothing: then, I ask the House—and ask it seriously—whether it be not better for us to incur peril for justice and humanity, for freedom, and for the sake of giving happiness to millions hitherto oppressed; or, whether it be better to incur peril for slavery, cruelty, and injustice—for the sake of destroy-

ing the happiness of those wretched beings, upon whom we have already showered every species of calamity?

I now come to tell gentlemen the course we mean to pursue: and I hope I shall not be deemed imprudent, if I throw off all disguise, and state frankly, and without reserve, the object at which we aim. The object at which we aim, is the extinction of Slavery—nothing less than the extinction of Slavery—in nothing less than the whole of the British dominions:—not, however, the rapid termination of that state—not the sudden emancipation of the Negro—but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as, by slow degrees, and in a course of years, first fitting and qualifying the Slave for the enjoyment of freedom, shall gently conduct us to the annihilation of Slavery. Nothing can more clearly shew that we mean nothing rash, nothing rapid, nothing abrupt, nothing bearing any feature of violence, than this—that if I succeed, to the fullest extent of my desires, confessedly sanguine, no man will be able to say, I even shall be unable to predict, that at such a time, or in such a year, Slavery will be abolished. In point of fact, it will never be abolished: it will never be destroyed. It will subside; it will decline; it will expire; it will, as it were, burn itself down into its socket and go out. We are far from meaning to attempt to cut down slavery, in the full maturity of its vigour. We rather shall leave it gently to decay—slowly, silently, almost imperceptibly, to die away, and to be forgotten.

Now, see the operation of our principle. We say—No more Slaves shall be made; no more children shall be enslaved. At present, we have in our Colonies, a certain body of Slaves. This will be reduced (to use a military phrase) by all casualties; but it will not be replenished and re-inforced by any new recruits. At present, the number is about a million. Next year, that number will be somewhat abated. In ten years' time, it will be visibly diminished. In twenty or thirty years' time, all the young, the vigorous, and those rising into life, will be free:

and the Slaves will be those who have passed the meridian of their days—who are declining into age—the aged and the decrepid. Every year, then, will make a considerable change: every child born will increase the one body—every Slave dying will reduce the other. A few years further, and you will find, only here and there, scattered over the face of the country, a remnant of Slavery. A very few years further, he too will have followed his brethren, and Slavery will be no more.

Now observe. This is not speculation. It is not a theory, which has never been tried: it is not one of the “new lights,” to use the expression of the honourable Member for Taunton: but it has taken place, and in a country too with which that honourable Member is very familiar. It may perhaps, nevertheless, be unknown to part of the House, that just in this way Slavery has gone out and expired in New York. Thirty years ago, New York was what is called a Slave State; that is, a proportion of its labourers were Slaves; and it was liable to those evils which Slavery never fails to generate. The principle which I now advocate was applied; and—without rebellion, without convulsion; without a single riot, without any thing that deserves the name of inconvenience—Slavery has gone out in the State of New York. The same thing has been done in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and several other of the United States. If any man asks me, with what effect this has been done; I answer, that there is not a person connected with that part of the world, who will not acknowledge, that much as it has contributed to the happiness of the Blacks, it has in no less degree promoted the happiness, the moral improvement, and even the pecuniary prosperity of the Whites. The fact is, every American from that part of the country is ready to acknowledge, that the worst of all curses has fled away, and left them. Here, then, the principle which I now recommend has begun, and concluded, its operation.

There are other parts of the world, where the same principle is now in action, where Slavery is gradually and quietly

working itself out. And now, Sir, I am going to take a great liberty—just to put a question to each gentleman in the House. Does he know in what part of the British dominions this very principle is in action? The point in dispute, be it observed, is this. I say, that our principle operates without noise and tumult. My opponents say, that it will be attended with violence and convulsion. Then, I put it to my opponent, if he know where this noisy, turbulent, convulsive, principle is at work? If he do not know, my point is proved—its quiet, peaceable, silent, nature is proved.

It is in full operation, at this moment, in Ceylon; and has been so, since 1816. The activity of the Governor, General Brownrigg, and of Sir Alexander Johnstone, there introduced it; and, as yet, it has produced no ill effect of any kind. The same thing occurred at Bencoolen, under the administration of Sir Stamford Raffles. The same, at Saint Helena. Now, this last does tell positively in my favour. Public curiosity has recently been excited, in an extraordinary degree. Books, enough to fill a library, have been written, detailing the administration of Sir Hudson Lowe. Acts the most slight—anecdotes the most trivial—expressions the most unmeaning, have been recorded with exact fidelity. Generations yet unborn shall know, that on such a day in July, Sir Hudson Lowe pronounced that the weather was warm; and that on such a day of the following December, Bonaparte uttered a conjecture that it would rain in the course of the week. Nothing has escaped the researches of the historian—nothing has been overlooked by the hungry curiosity of the public—nothing—Yes! one thing only has never been noticed; namely, that Sir Hudson Lowe gave the death-blow to Slavery at Saint Helena.

The same principle, only upon a much larger scale, has been operating in South America. By a fundamental law of Colombia, every child born after the day when the Constitution was proclaimed, is, *ipso facto*, free. They

did that at which I am now aiming ; and they did more. They liberated the children, but they also took measures for emancipating the parent. They levied a legacy duty, varying from three to ten per cent. upon all disposable personal property : they set apart this fund for a special object : and they declared, that no power should exist in the state to alter the destination of a single shilling. The purchase to which that tax is devoted, is the purchase of Negroes from personal slavery, and it is to continue till no Slave remains in Columbia. If ever there was an opportunity of trying, whether the principle was productive of peace or of convulsion, that opportunity was now afforded. Columbia was overrun by hostile armies. The masters were often obliged to abandon their property. The Black population amounted to nine hundred thousand persons. An honourable friend of mine, on a former occasion, contended, that the numbers were inconsiderable. He was mistaken. I have in my hand a letter from Mr. Ravenga, in which he states, that, in a population of three millions, the number of Blacks and Indians is nine hundred thousand. Now, of these a large number were suddenly emancipated. Bolivar gave liberty to seven hundred. Others acted in the same way. The law to which I have alluded, which liberates all the children, is rapidly liberating the adults. What has been the effect? Where the opportunities of insurrection have been so frequent and so tempting, what has been the effect? Mr. Ravenga authorizes me to say, that the effect has been, a degree of docility on the part of the Blacks, a degree of confidence and security on the part of the Whites, unknown in any preceding period of the history of Columbia.

Now for the application of this principle. What we contend for is this, that we should cut off the supply ; that we should intercept the fountain by which Slavery is fed ; that all Negro children, born after a certain day, should be free. I have already shewn the safety and practicability of acting upon this principle. Will any man deny its propriety and justice? A Negro child is

born to-day. What right on earth have we to say, that that child shall be a slave? I want to know by what authority we act, under what warrant we proceed, when we say, that that child shall eat the bitter bread, and do the bitter labour of a bondsman, all the days of his life? I know the answer that will be given me: "The father is mine; the mother is mine; and therefore the child is mine." That is, you have made his parents eat the bitter bread, and do the bitter labour of Slaves; and this crime, which you have committed against his parents, is to be your apology for the crime which you design to commit against him.

But, Sir, I hope that every man in this House, nay, that every man and woman in Great Britain, will seriously weigh this question. By what principle of justice, by what tenet of religion do we act, when we say to the planter, "There! a Black child is born to-day: take him: do what you like with him: make him a brute, if it so please you; a brute in his labour, a brute in ignorance: feed him like a brute, flog him like a brute!" I say, how are we authorised, on a child that has done no wrong, to pronounce that sentence, to inflict that curse?

It is a crime to go to Africa, and steal a man, and make him a Slave. For two centuries this was no crime at all. It was most just and innocent commerce. My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) instituted an inquiry into this innocent traffic, and it turned out to be a most intolerable enormity. It is a crime, then, by the laws of England, to make the full-grown African a Slave. And, how is it less a crime, to make a new-born Creole a Slave? I say, it is as great—it is even a greater crime. The African has at least passed a considerable portion of his life in freedom: for twenty or thirty years, he has tasted the innumerable enjoyments which liberty confers. But, the child who is made a Slave from his birth, knows nothing but servitude and misery.—Then, as to guilt. Formerly we divided it with another party. The Black factor made the man a slave: that was his share of the guilt. We kept

him as a Slave : that was our share. But, in the case of the child whom we enslave, the whole abomination is our own. We make him a Slave, in the first place : we use him as a Slave, in the second. It is a crime to murder a man : it is no less a crime to murder a child. It is a crime to rob a man : it is no less a crime to rob a child. It is a crime to enslave a man : and, is it no crime to enslave a child ?

Now, Sir, let the House observe the moderation with which we proceed. We say, " Make no more Slaves—desist from that iniquity—stop—abstain from an act, in itself as full of guilt, entailing in its consequences as much of misery, as any felony you can mention." We do not say, " Retrace your steps ;" but " Stop." We do not say, " Make reparation for the wrong you have done ;" but, " Do no more wrong ; go no further." Slave-trading and slavery (for they are but two parts of the same act), are the greatest crime that any nation ever committed : and when that day comes, which shall disclose all secrets, and unveil all guilt, the broadest and blackest of all will be that, the first part of which is Slave-trading, and the last part Slavery ; and no nation under heaven has ever been so deeply tainted with both the one and the other as we have been. To a nation thus steeped in this species of iniquity, can less be said than this : " We do not ask that you should suffer punishment ; we do not ask that you should undergo deep humiliation ; we do not ask that you shall make reparation to those you have wronged ; we do not even say, Cease to enjoy those acts of criminality which you have begun ; but, Take the full benefit and fruition of past and present injustice ; complete what you have commenced ; screw from your Slave all that his bones and his muscles will yield you : only stop there ; and, when every Slave now living shall have found repose in the grave, then let it be said, that the country is satiated with Slavery, and has done with it for ever."

This, after all, is the main point. It secures, a distant indeed, but a certain extinction of Slavery. And I give

notice to his Majesty's Ministers—I give notice to the gentlemen connected with the West Indies, that if they concede every thing else, but withhold this, we shall not relax in our exertions. The public voice is with us; and I, for one, will never fail to call upon the public, loudly to express their opinion, till justice has so far prevailed as to pronounce that every child is entitled to liberty.

Now, for the existing Slaves. Slaves they are. Slaves, I fear, they must too generally continue; but Slaves, under a description of servitude considerably mitigated.

I cannot say I deserve any credit for abstaining to liberate them at the present moment. I must confess, that if I conceived it were possible for the Slaves to rise abruptly from their state of bondage, to the happier condition of freemen; if we could clothe them, not only with the rights and privileges, but with the virtuous restraints of social life; if I did not know that the same system, which has reduced them to the condition of brutes, has brutalized their minds; if, in fact, I deemed them ripe for deliverance, my moderation, I confess it, would be but small. I should say, "The sooner *you* cease from doing injustice, and *they* from enduring it, the better." I should take no circuitous course: I should propose no tardy measures of amelioration; I should name no distant day of deliverance: but this night, at once and for ever, I should propose to strike off their chains; and I should not wait one moment, from a conception that the master has the least shadow of a title to the person of the Slave. But, alas, Sir! the Slave is not ripe for liberty. The bitterest reproach that can be uttered against the system of slavery, that it debases the man, that it enfeebles his powers, that it changes his character, that it expels all which is naturally good; this, its bitterest reproach, must be its protection. We are foiled by the very wickedness of the system. We are obliged to argue in a most vicious circle. We make the man worthless; and, because he is worthless, we retain him as a Slave. We make him a brute, and then allege his brutality as a valid reason for withholding his rights.

Now, one word as to the right of the master. There are persons (not in this House, I trust,) whose notions of justice are so confused and confounded by slavery, as to suppose that the planter has something like an honest title to the person of the Slave. We have been so long accustomed to talk of "my slave," and "your slave," and what he will fetch if sold, that we are apt to imagine that he is really yours or mine, and that we have a substantial right to keep or sell him. Then, let us, just for a moment, fathom this right. Here is a certain valuable commodity; and here are two claimants for it—a White man, and a Black man. Now, what is the commodity in dispute?—The body of the Black man. The White man says, "It is mine;" and the Black man says, "It is mine." Now, the question is, if every man had his own, to whom would that Black body belong? The claim of the Black man to his own body, is just this—Nature gave it him. He holds it by the grant of God. That compound of bone and muscles is his, by the most irreproachable of all titles—a title which admits not, what every other species of title admits—a suspicion of violence, or fraud, or irregularity. Will any man say, he came by his body in an illegal manner? Does any man suspect, that he played the knave, and purloined his limbs? I do not mean to say the Negro is not a thief; but he must be a very subtle thief indeed, if he stole even so much as his own little finger.

At least, you will admit this—the Negro has a pretty good *primæ facie* claim to his own person. If any man thinks he has a better, the *onus probandi* is on him. Then we come to the claim of the White man. What is the foundation of your right? It shall be the best that can be conceived. You received him from your father. Very good! Your father bought him from a neighbouring planter. Very good! That planter bought him of a trader, at the Kingston Slave-market: and that trader bought him of a man-merchant in Africa. So far you are quite safe! How did the man-merchant acquire him? He

~~steal him~~—he kidnapped him! The very root of your claim is robbery, violence, inconceivable wickedness. If any thing on earth was ever proved by evidence, it was proved, before the Slave-trade Committee, that the method of obtaining Slaves in Africa was robbery, man-stealing, and murder. Your pure title rests on these sacred foundations! If your Slave came direct from Africa, your right to his person is absolutely nothing. But, your claim to the child born in Jamaica is (if I may use the expression) less still. The new-born infant has done—can have done—nothing to forfeit his right to freedom. And, to talk about rights, justice, equity, and law as connected with slavery, is to talk downright nonsense. If we had no interest in the case, and were only speaking of the conduct of another nation, we should all use the same language; and we should speak of slavery, as we now speak of Slave-trading: that is, we should call it rank, naked, flagrant, undisguised injustice.

But when I say, that the planter has no claim against the Slave, I do not say, that he has no claim against the British Nation. If slavery be an injustice, it is an injustice which has been licensed by British law. But, whatever may be the claim of the planter against the British Government, he can pretend to none to the person of a child because he happens to be born of Negro parents.

I will now take the liberty of reading a short extract of a letter which, on the 11th of last April, I addressed to my honourable friend opposite, in order to put Lord Bathurst, and his Majesty's Government, in full possession of our views and intentions on this subject:—

“The subject divides itself into two: the condition of the existing Slaves, and the condition of their children. With regard to the former, I wish the following improvements:—

“1. That the Slave should be attached to the island, and, under modifications, to the soil.

“2. That they cease to be chattels in the eye of the law.

" 3. That their testimony may be received, *quantum valeat*.

" 4. That when any one lays in his claim to the services of a Negro, the *onus probandi* should rest on the claimant.

" 5. That all obstructions to manumissions should be removed.

" 6. That the provisions of the Spanish law (fixing by competent authority the value of the Slave, and allowing him to purchase a day at a time,) should be introduced.

" 7. That no Governor, Judge, or Attorney-General should be a Slave-owner.

" 8. That an effectual provision shall be made for the religious instruction of the Slave.

" 9. That marriage should be enforced and sanctioned.

" 10. That the Sunday should be devoted by the Slave to repose and religious instruction; and that other time should be allotted for the cultivation of his provision grounds.

" 11. That some (but what I cannot say) measures should be taken, to restrain the authority of the master, in punishing his untried Slave, and that some substitute should be found for the driving system.

" These are the proposed qualifications of the existing slavery. But I am far more anxiously bent upon the extinction of slavery altogether, by rendering all the Negro children, born after a certain day, free. For them it will be necessary to provide education. God grant, that his Majesty's Ministers may be disposed to accomplish those objects, or to permit others to accomplish them."

For all the blood spilt in African wars fomented by English capital—for civil war which we contrived to render interminable—for all the villages set in flames by the contending parties—for all the horrors and the terrors of these poor creatures, roused from their rest by the yells of the man-hunter whom we sent—for civilization excluded—for the gentle arts which embellish life excluded—for honest and harmless commerce excluded—for Christianity, and all that it comprehends, expelled for

two centuries from Africa—for the tens and tens of thousands of men murdered in these midnight marauds—for the tens and tens of thousands suffocated in the holds of our Slave-ships—for the tens and tens of thousands of emaciated beings, cast ashore in the West Indies, emaciated beings, “ refuse men” (for such was the mercantile phrase) lingering to a speedy death—for the tens and tens of thousands still more unhappy who, surviving, lived on to perpetual slavery, to the whip of the task-master, to ignorance, to crime, to heathen darkness—for all these, we owe large and liberal atonement. And I do thank God, we still have it in our power to make some compensation. We have it in our power to sweeten a little the bitterness of captivity—to give the Slaves of the West Indies something to render life more endurable—to give them something like justice and protection—to interpose a jury between the Negro and the brutality of his master’s servant—to declare that the Slave shall not be torn from the cottage he has built, from the children he has reared, from the female whom he loves—above all, for that is effectual compensation, we may give him the truths of the Christian Religion, which, as yet, we have withheld.

For his children, there is a wider range of recompence. We may strip them of every vestige of servitude; and, by taking upon ourselves, for a season, the whole burthen of their maintenance, education, and religious instruction, we may raise them into a happy, contented, enlightened, free peasantry. I conclude, as I concluded my letter to Lord Bathurst—God grant, that his Majesty’s Ministers may be disposed to accomplish these objects, or to permit others to accomplish them!—I move,

“ That the State of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian Religion; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.”

Mr. Secretary CANNING.—The appeal to his Majesty's Cabinet with which the honourable gentleman concluded his speech, makes me feel it my duty to address myself to the House at this early period of the debate, for the purpose of stating, without reserve, the opinions entertained by myself and my colleagues with respect to this most important, and I must say, at the same time (notwithstanding what has fallen from the honourable gentleman), this most fearful question.—I never in my life proceeded to the discussion of any question under a stronger impression of its manifold difficulties: not indeed in reference to the principles on which my opinions are grounded, nor with respect to the practical conclusion to which I may think it expedient to come, but on account of the dangers, which, even after all that the honourable gentleman has said to the contrary, appear to me to attend a discussion, in which one rash word, perhaps even one too ardent expression, might raise a flame not easily to be extinguished.

I mention these circumstances, Sir, not for the purpose of imputing any blame to the honourable gentleman, or to those friends in conjunction with whom he has brought forward the resolution in your hands, nor for that of discouraging fair and free deliberation; but I take the liberty of throwing out a caution to those who, in a more advanced stage of the discussion, and when conflicting opinions may have produced a warmth which I do not feel, might be induced to colour more deeply the pictures which the honourable gentleman himself has sketched with no light hand; and who might thus excite feelings which it is not necessary to awaken for the accomplishment of any practical good, but which, if awakened, might either impede the attainment of that good, or expose it to gratuitous hazard.

And here the honourable gentleman must allow me to ask, What had the latter part of his speech to do with his present purpose? Why did he think it expedient to recur to the former delinquencies of this country, which, if

capable of expiation, have been expiated? Why did he go back to a state of things in the West Indies, to which, so far as they could be remedied, remedy has been applied? Why did he go out of his way to recal the horrors and cruelties connected with the now abolished Slave Trade, which were at former times, brought under the notice of Parliament? Why, when he was stirring a question totally new, (and I mention that character of the question; not as matter of blame but as matter of fact)—why did he mix it up with that other odious question, often indeed discussed, but long ago decided, with which, during an agitation of twenty years, it was never before placed in *juxta*-position but for the purpose of being contrasted with and separated from it? In all former discussions, in all former votes against the Slave Trade, it cannot surely be forgotten that the ulterior purpose of emancipation was studiously disclaimed. I have myself frequently joined in that disclaimer on former occasions. In doing so, I certainly did not mean to advance so untenable a proposition as that it was intended to purchase the abolition of the Slave Trade by an indefinite continuance of Slavery. Undoubtedly that was not my meaning; but what I at least did mean—what in all fairness any man who took the same distinction must be held to have meant—was, that the two questions should be kept separate, and argued on their separate grounds; that the odium of that which we were labouring to abolish should not be brought to bear with increased intensity on that of which we were compelled to allow the continuance. Slavery, not willingly but necessarily, was allowed to continue. I do not say that it is therefore to continue indefinitely; I speak not of it as a system to be carefully preserved and cherished, but as one to be dealt with according to its own nature, and with reference to its inherent peculiarities. We must be considered as having tacitly, if not expressly, taken the engagement, not, on every subsequent discussion, to look back to atrocities which have ceased, not to revive animosities which have been extinguished, and to throw

in the teeth of those whose interests are at hazard, cruelties with which they in fact had no concern. After such an implied pledge, it is somewhat hard in the honourable gentleman to revert to those past-gone topics, instead of confining himself to facts and arguments which properly belong to the motion which he has introduced.

I will not follow the honourable gentleman through the various matters of this kind which he has brought to his aid; but I will here take the liberty to dismiss the consideration of the Slave Trade as of a thing forgotten and gone by: and I will entreat the House to look at the present situation of the West Indies, not as at a population accumulated by a succession of crimes such as those which the honourable gentleman has detailed, but simply as it is.

The honourable gentleman has treated this subject rather with powerful declamation than with sober statement: for I must beg leave to consider as a figure of eloquence, rather than as a practical argument, the intimation that we must deal with this question not as a matter of justice and judgment, but of impulse and feeling. That is not a ground on which Parliament can be called upon to act. The manner in which the Black population of the West Indies has been collected may indeed be the subject of reflection to the historian, or discussion to the moralist: but, in calling upon the Legislature to adopt a measure of the greatest importance, and of the utmost difficulty, the honourable gentleman addresses himself, not to the prudence, but to the feeling of the House, I confess it seems to me that he pursues the course least likely to lead to a satisfactory result.

Looking then at the present condition of the West Indies, I find there a numerous Black population, with a comparatively small proportion of Whites. The question to be decided is, how civil rights, moral improvement; and general happiness are to be communicated to this overpowering multitude of Slaves, with safety to the lives and security to the interests of the White population, our fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens. Is it possible that

there can be a difference of opinion upon this question? Is it possible that those most nearly concerned in the present state of property in the West Indies, and those who contemplate the great subject with the eye of the philosopher and the moralist, should look at it in any other than one point of view? Is it possible for a member of Parliament, still more for a member of the Government, to say that he does not wish, so far as is consistent with other great considerations necessarily involved, to impart every improvement which may tend to raise in the scale of being the unfortunate creatures now in a state of servitude and ignorance? Undoubtedly, sacrifices ought to be made for the attainment of so great a good; but would I on this account strike at the root of the system—a system the growth of ages—and unhesitatingly and rashly level it at a blow? Are we not all aware that there are knots which cannot be suddenly disentangled, and must not be cut;—difficulties which, if solved at all, must be solved by patient consideration and impartial attention, in order that we may not do the most flagrant injustice by aiming at justice itself?

The honourable gentleman begins his resolution with a recital which I confess greatly embarrasses me: he says, that “the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian Religion.” God forbid that he who ventures to object to this statement, should therefore be held to assert a contradiction to it! I do not say that the state of Slavery is consonant to the principles of the British Constitution; still less do I say that the state of Slavery is consonant to the principles of the Christian Religion. But though I do not advance these propositions myself, nevertheless I must say, that in my opinion the propositions of the honourable gentleman are not practically true. If the honourable gentleman means that the British Constitution does not admit of Slavery in that part of the British dominions where the constitution is in full play, undoubtedly his statement is true; but it

makes nothing for his object. If, however, the honourable Member is to be understood to maintain that the British Constitution has not tolerated for years, nay more for centuries, in the Colonies, the existence of Slavery, a state of society unknown in the mother country,—that is a position which is altogether without foundation, and positively and practically untrue. In my opinion, when a proposition is submitted to this House for the purpose of inducing the House to act upon it, care should be taken not to confound, as I think is done in this resolution, what is morally true with what is historically false. Undoubtedly the spirit of the British Constitution is, in its principle, hostile to any modification of Slavery. But as undoubtedly the British Parliament has for ages tolerated, sanctioned, protected, and even encouraged a system of colonial establishment of which it well knew Slavery to be the foundation.

In the same way, God forbid that I should contend that the Christian religion is favourable to Slavery. But I confess I feel a strong objection to the introduction of the name of Christianity, as it were bodily, into any parliamentary question. Religion ought to controul the acts and to regulate the consciences of governments, as well as of individuals; but when it is put forward to serve a political purpose, however laudable, it is done, I think, after the example of ill times, and I cannot but remember the ill objects to which in those times such a practice was applied. Assuredly no Christian will deny that the spirit of the Christian religion is hostile to Slavery, as it is to every abuse and misuse of power: it is hostile to all deviations from rectitude, morality, and justice; but if it be meant that in the Christian religion there is a special denunciation against Slavery, that Slavery and Christianity cannot exist together,—I think the honourable gentleman himself must admit that the proposition is historically false; and again I must say, that I cannot consent to the confounding, for a political purpose, what is morally true with what is historically false. One peculiar charac-

teristic of the Christian dispensation, if I must venture in this place upon such a theme, is, that it has accommodated itself to all states of society, rather than that it has selected any particular state of society for the peculiar exercise of its influence. If it has added lustre to the sceptre of the sovereign, it has equally been the consolation of the Slave. It applies to all ranks of life, to all conditions of men; and the sufferings of this world, even to those upon whom they press most heavily, are rendered comparatively indifferent by the prospect of compensation in the world of which Christianity affords the assurance. True it certainly is, that Christianity generally tends to elevate, not to degrade, the character of man; but it is not true, in the specific sense conveyed in the honourable gentleman's resolution, it is not true that there is that in the Christian religion which makes it impossible that it should co-exist with Slavery in the world. Slavery has been known in all times and under all systems of religion, whether true or false. *Non meus hic sermo*: I speak but what others have written on this point; and I beg leave to read to the House a passage from Dr. Paley, which is directly applicable to the subject that we are discussing.

"Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries when Christianity appeared; yet no passage is to be found in the Christian Scriptures by which it is condemned and prohibited. This is true; for Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the civil institutions of any. But does it follow, from the silence of Scripture concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed were right; or that the bad should not be exchanged for better? Besides this, the discharging of all slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing Slavery to be unlawful, would have no better effect than to let loose one-half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion which asserted their right to freedom; masters would hardly have been

persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority; the most calamitous of all consequences, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction, of the Christian name. The truth is, the emancipation of Slaves should be gradual, and be carried on by the provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government. Christianity can only operate as an alternative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the Greek and Roman Slavery, and since these the feudal tyranny, had declined before it. And we trust that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will abolish what remains of this odious institution."

The honourable gentleman cannot wish more than I do, that under this gradual operation, under this widening diffusion of light and liberality, the spirit of the Christian religion may effect all the objects he has at heart. But it seems to me that it is not, for the practical attainment of his objects, desirable that that which may be the influencing spirit should be put forward as the active agent. When Christianity was introduced into the world, it took its root amidst the galling slavery of the Roman Empire; more galling in many respects (though not precisely of the same character) than that of which the honourable gentleman, in common I may say with every friend of humanity, complains. Slavery at that period gave to the master the power of life and death over his bondsman: this is undeniable, known to every body: *Ita servus homo est!* are the words put by Juvenal into the mouth of the fine lady who calls upon her husband to crucify his Slave. If the evils of this dreadful system nevertheless gradually vanished before the gentle but certain influence of Christianity, and if the great Author of the system trusted rather to this gradual operation of the principle than to any immediate or direct precept, I think Parliament

would do more wisely rather to rely upon the like operation of the same principle than to put forward the authority of Christianity, in at least a questionable shape. The name of Christianity ought not to be thus used unless we are prepared to act in a much more summary manner than the honourable gentleman himself proposes. If the existence of Slavery be repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion, how can the honourable gentleman himself consent to pause even for an instant, or to allow any considerations of prudence to intervene between him and his object? How can he propose to divide Slaves into two classes; one of which is to be made free directly, while he leaves the other to the gradual extinction of their state of suffering? But if, as I contend, the British Constitution does not, in its necessary operation, go to extinguish Slavery in every colony, it is evident that the honourable gentleman's proposition is not to be understood in the precise sense which the honourable gentleman gives to it; and if the Christian Religion does not require the instant and unqualified abolition of Slavery, it is evident, I apprehend, that the honourable Member has mistated in his resolution the principle upon which he himself is satisfied to act. But while I contend against the literal sense, and too positive language, of the honourable gentleman's resolutions; and while I declare my unwillingness to adopt them as the basis of our proceedings; let me not be misunderstood as quarreling with their intention. I admit as fully as the honourable gentleman himself, that the spirit both of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion is in favour of a gradual extermination of this unquestioned evil: and I am ready to proceed with the honourable gentleman to all reasonable and practicable measures for that purpose.

On these principles I feel disposed to agree in much that the honourable gentleman has said. To many of his measures of detail I have not the slightest objection;

without, however, admitting the solidity of all his ingenious illustrations, or subscribing to the correctness of all his arguments. I think the House will be of my opinion, that at this time of day we must consider property as the creature of law; and that, when law has sanctioned any particular species of property, we cannot legislate in this House as if we were legislating for a new world, the surface of which was totally clear from the obstruction of antecedent claims and obligations. If the honourable gentleman asks me, on the other hand, whether I maintain the inviolability of property so far as to affirm the proposition, that the children of Slaves must continue to be Slaves for ever,—I answer frankly, No. If again he asks me how I reconcile my notions of reverence for the sacredness of property with the degree of authority I am prepared to exercise for the attainment of my object, I answer with equal frankness, In accomplishing a great national object, in doing an act of national justice, I do not think it right to do it at the exclusive expense of any one class of the community. I am disposed to go gradually to work, in order to diminish both the danger to be risked and the burden to be incurred. My opinion is also, and I am prepared to state it (the honourable gentleman having made his appeal to the Government on this question some weeks ago) as the opinion of my colleagues as well as my own—that in order that the object which we have all in view may be undertaken safely and effectually, it is better that it should be left in the hands of the Executive Government.

With that view I have taken the liberty of preparing certain resolutions, which I shall propose to substitute for those of the honourable gentleman. Between the two sets of resolutions the substantial difference, it will be seen, is not very essential; but from the difference of responsibility between the honourable gentleman and myself, I must of necessity lay down my principles with greater caution than he has done; and proceed more coolly, and

considerately, so as to avoid the liability to misrepresentation. Not that I wish to shrink from particulars, so far as it may be expedient to enter into them.

I may say then, that there are two or three points referred to by the honourable gentleman, to which I cannot refuse my concurrence. For instance, he asks if the present mode of working—that which is described by the term, driving—the slaves, by means of a cart-whip in the hand of one who follows them, ought to be allowed? I reply, Certainly not. But I go farther; I tell the honourable gentleman, that in raising any class of persons from a servile to a civil condition, one of the first principles of improvement is in the observance paid to the difference of sexes. I would therefore abolish, with respect to females, the use of the whip, not only as a stimulant to labour in the field; I would abolish it altogether as an instrument of punishment,—thus saving the weaker sex from indecency and degradation. I should further be inclined to concur with the honourable gentleman as to the insufficiency of the time allowed to the Negroes for religious and moral instruction, so long as the cultivation of his provision ground and his marketing occupy the greater part of the Sabbath. In this point I am anxious to introduce improvement into the present system.

These are points on which I have no hesitation in agreeing with the honourable gentleman; but there are some others requiring more mature consideration in practice, although, in principle, I feel bound to say that I agree with him. I agree with him in thinking that what is now considered, by custom, and in point of fact, the property of the Negro ought to be secured to him by law. I agree with him in thinking that it would be beneficial if the liberty of bequest were assured to him: perhaps it might be made conditional upon marriage. I agree with him in thinking that it may perhaps be desirable to do something with regard to the admitting the evidence of Negroes; but this I hold to be a much more difficult question, and one requiring more thorough

deliberation than I have yet had time to give to it. It is a point of such extreme delicacy, and demands so much local and practical knowledge, that I hardly feel justified in pronouncing at this moment any decided opinion upon it. Thus far I concur, that it well merits favourable and patient investigation ; and for myself, and those who act with me, I can say that we should commence that investigation with a leaning to the view of the subject taken by the honourable gentleman. More at present I will not say.

I agree further with the honourable gentleman in thinking, that (though great difficulties may be experienced, not from the moral but from the legal part of the question) the process of the writ of *venditioni exponas*, by which the Slaves are sold separately from the estates, ought, if possible, to be abolished.

I have mentioned these particulars as those which have most immediately attracted the attention of his Majesty's servants. I can assure the honourable gentleman and the House, that they have looked at this subject with a sincere desire to render all possible assistance to the undertaking of the honourable gentleman, and to co-operate in every practicable measure for ameliorating the condition of the Negroes.

I should ill discharge my duty this day, after the warning of the last few weeks, during which this great subject has been in discussion, if I were not to say that, upon most of the particulars which I have mentioned, if not upon all, there is every disposition among those who may be considered as representing the colonial interests in this House and in this country, to give them a fair, liberal, and candid consideration.

The immediate question before the House may therefore be narrowed to this point,—whether it is better to enter upon this question in a temper of mind unembittered by the retrospect of past evils and atrocities, and with a chance of carrying with us a degree of consent on the part of those most interested and most exposed to the hazard of injury from any change ; or, at the risk of angry discussions,

which, however innoxious in this House, yet, if echoed in other places, might be attended with the most frightful consequences, to adopt at once the propositions of the honourable gentleman. The question is, whether, upon the declaration of principles now made to the House, the honourable gentleman and his friends will be contented with the resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose, or will press his motion to a division, at all the hazards which I would rather leave to be imagined than describe.

There is, however, one point in the honourable gentleman's statement upon which I certainly entertain a difference of opinion: I mean, the proposal of fixing a period at which the children of Slaves shall be free. I doubt—not from any peculiar knowledge that I have of the subject, but upon the general principles of human nature—whether the measure recommended by the honourable gentleman would produce the degree of satisfaction which he anticipates, and whether it might not produce feelings of an opposite nature. I doubt whether in its operation it would not prove at once the least efficient and the most hazardous mode of attaining his own object. But I throw out these observations with the same frankness and candour with which I have expressed myself in approval of those points of the honourable gentleman's propositions in which I have had the pleasure to concur. I desire not to be bound by these observations any more than I feel myself bound to carry into effect, at all risks, and at all hazards, those points upon which I have given a favourable opinion. I declare openly and sincerely my present impressions, formed after the best deliberation that there has been time to give to the consideration of the subject. I trust and believe that I have not spoken positively upon any thing, upon which there is a probability of my having hereafter to retract what I have said. I speak doubtfully on some points, even where the bent of my opinion is very strong: but the one thing I am most anxious to avoid, is the declaration of any pledge of an abstract nature; the laying down any principle, the construction of which is to be left to those whose feelings

and prejudices and passions must naturally be awake to these discussions, and who, when they learn by a declaration of this House, that "the continuance of Slavery, and the principles of the Christian Religion, are incompatible," might imagine they saw, in such a declaration, what, I say, in abstract reasoning I have, I think, shewn they would be fairly entitled to see in it, their own immediate and unqualified emancipation. Lay down such principles I say, and those persons would have a right to draw that conclusion; and when the House had once made such a declaration, the qualification would come too late.

I am therefore peculiarly desirous that the qualification should be embodied in the same vote which affirms the principle, and that nothing should be left to inference and construction; that even the hopes held out for the future should be qualified with the doubts, with the delays, and with the difficulties to be surmounted before they can possibly be realized.

I will now, with the leave of the House, read the Resolutions which I propose to submit to the House for its consideration.

"1st, That it is expedient to adopt effectual, and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the Slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.

"2d, That through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

"3d, That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein."

If the House should be inclined to adopt these Resolutions, I shall then follow them up with a

"4th, That these Resolutions be laid before his Majesty."

There now remains but one point, which, after having so fully expressed my sentiments to the House, I am peculiarly anxious to impress upon its consideration: I mean the mode of execution—the manner in which the Executive Government would have to act in respect of these Resolutions, in the event of their adoption. The House is aware, that over certain of the colonies in the West Indies, the Crown exercises immediate power, without the intervention of any Colonial Legislature. In their case, the agency of the Crown, of course, will be more free and unfettered than in Colonies having their own separate government. At the same time, I must declare, that we have a right to expect from the Colonial Legislatures a full and fair co-operation. And, being as much averse by habit, as I am at this moment precluded by duty, from mooted imaginary points, and looking to the solution of extreme though not impossible questions, I must add, that any resistance which might be manifested to the express and declared wishes of Parliament, any resistance, I mean, which should partake, not of reason, but of contumacy, would create a case (a case, however, which I sincerely trust will never occur) upon which his Majesty's Government would not hesitate to come down to Parliament for counsel.

I will not further prolong a discussion (which it has been my object to bring to a close) by any general reflections further than this, that giving every credit as I do to the motives which have actuated the honourable gentleman, I am sure he will feel that it is perfectly consistent with a complete sympathy with his moral feelings, and consistent equally with my duty, that I should look at this subject more practically, more cautiously, and more dispassionately, and (if the honourable gentleman will permit me to say so much) more prudently than the honourable gentleman; whose warmth, however, though I must not imitate, I do not mean harshly to blame.

And further, I would assure those whose interests are involved in this great question, that whatever may be the

result of the present discussion, I and my colleagues are not more anxious, on the one hand, to redeem the character of the country, so far as it may have suffered by the state of Slavery in the Colonies, than we think ourselves bound, on the other, to guard and protect the just interests of those who, by no fault of their own, by inheritance, by accident, by the encouragement of repeated Acts of the Legislature, find their property vested in a concern exposed to innumerable hazards and difficulties, which do not belong to property of another character; such as, if they had their option (as their ancestors had it), they would doubtless, in most cases, have preferred. If they have stood these hazards, if they have encountered these difficulties—and have to stand and encounter them still—we may not be able to secure them against the consequences of such a state of things; but at least we have no right to aggravate the hazards or the difficulties which we cannot relieve. (See Appendix B.)

The original Resolution was then read by the Speaker, and the question put upon the Amendment.

Mr. WILBERFORCE.—Before I enter into any discussion of the question before the House, I think it necessary to say a few words in vindication of the line pursued by my honourable friend near me (Mr. F. Buxton) on the present occasion; more particularly with reference to the proposition with which my honourable friend commenced his speech. My honourable friend addressed himself to a British Parliament, and fully, fairly, and candidly, told the House what were his real intentions in submitting his motion to its consideration,—a gradual but total extinction of Slavery in the Colonies of this country. With powerful eloquence, and the justest reasoning, my honourable friend appealed to the understandings of honourable Members, and called to their recollection the sound and wholesome principles of the British Constitution;—principles which declared to be objectionable, in the highest degree, the very existence of Slavery. But

it is rather my wish to avoid any useless repetition of points on which there is no dispute; and to adopt the opinions and principles which have already been fully acknowledged, and indeed justly respected.

It is with no little pleasure that I heard my right honourable friend (Mr. Canning) accede to several of the propositions made by my honourable friend near me (Mr. Buxton). I refer particularly to the abolition of the system of female punishment; the reservation of certain days to the Negroes for labouring on their own account; the discontinuance of the practice of working on Sundays; the abolition of the Sunday markets; the abolition of the driving system, or of urging the Field Slaves to their labour by the whip; and, above all, the introduction and universal establishment of a system of religious instruction, and of the moral reformation of the Slaves, of which marriage was of course to be one of the principal particulars. But I wish my right honourable friend to consider, what I think he does not seem sufficiently to bear in mind, in relation to what has been often alleged of the mischiefs likely to arise from the discussions of this question, that whatever may be the dangers to be apprehended from such discussions, there are yet no dangers so great, or so formidable, as those which must arise from a continuance of the present West-Indian system. And therefore I must assure my right honourable friend, that in directing a superintending and vigilant eye to the state of things in the West Indies, and by endeavouring to apply remedies to the existing grievances, with a fair regard to the interests and well-being of all the parties concerned, he is doing no more than discharging duties powerfully incumbent on him as a Member of the British Legislature, and still more as a Minister of the Crown, and a watchful guardian of the general interests of this Country. And now, Sir, let me say a word or two on my honourable friend's having laid the grounds of his resolution in the principles of the Christian religion.—What could be more reasonable, what more appropriate, in the

Senate of a nation which calls itself Christian and acknowledges the Divine authority of the holy Scriptures ?

Again; let me remind my right honourable friend, and the House, that it was necessary for my honourable friend boldly to assert and maintain the rights and privileges of the Black population in the West Indies. At the same time, I am thoroughly convinced, that there is no man more ready than my honourable friend (Mr. Buxton) fairly to consider the situation in which many of the West-Indian proprietors would be placed in the event of the execution of his plans, the effect of which undoubtedly would be gradually to extinguish Slavery in the West Indies. I entirely agree with my right honourable friend, in thinking, that nothing would be more unfair than to consider those whose interests are involved in this question, in any invidious point of view: but surely, on the other hand, if we are really desirous of putting an end to slavery, it is absolutely necessary boldly to state that it is a great and intolerable grievance.

With respect to the dangers which may arise from a discussion of these points, I can only state, that my right honourable friend must enter into an investigation of the requisite measures for putting an end to the evils acknowledged to exist, with a recollection of the infinite danger which must attend a continuance of the present system of slavery. Many reasons present themselves to my mind why it is far safer to get rid of these evils altogether, than to modify them. But I must remind the House, that, as to the discussion being so dangerous as has been frequently alleged by those who oppose any alteration in the present system, the notion has been in fact contradicted and exploded by the West-Indians themselves, who from time to time have been in the habit of inserting in their colonial newspapers articles which might be supposed to be of the most dangerous tendency, calculated to inflame the minds of the Black population, and even to tempt them to insurrection. Now, Sir, this fact, and it is impossible to dispute it, is a great encouragement to us in the present dis-

cussion ; for the House must be now aware, that whatever apprehensions concerning the effects, on the minds of the Negro Slaves, of discussions in this House, might be deemed reasonable by individuals resident in this country, yet that these alarms have not been felt in the slightest degree by those resident on the spot, where danger only could arise, and where the probabilities of it might be most justly estimated. There are doubtless, however, dangers great and serious, and even formidable, to be encountered ; but they are such as arise out of the state and circumstances of our West-Indian colonies, in relation both to their insular and their continental neighbours ; and on the whole, they are such as on the whole would be lessened rather than augmented by the reforms in the contemplation of my honourable friend.

I cannot forbear alluding to another point, which I confess has made a strong impression upon my mind. We have had laid before us " Returns of the Slave Population of the West-India Islands." I do not know whether my right honourable friend is aware of this important circumstance, that there is every reason to believe that, in all the West-India islands, the population has been for some years past, and is at this very time, decreasing. I beg the very particular attention of my right honourable friend to this fact ; and let the House also attend to it, because it will be a sort of specimen of the difficulties we may in future have to encounter. It is an established and well-known fact, that in our West-India islands, the Slaves, though in a climate similar to their own, instead of keeping up their numbers, have for a long series of years been gradually decreasing ; and though the decrease has been gradually lessening, yet these Returns clearly show that it still continues. This decrease is the more extraordinary, because the Negro race is found to have greatly increased its numbers in every other country, even in the, to them, uncongenial climate of North America. The causes to which the Abolitionists chiefly referred this deviation from the ordinary course of nature,

this exclusion from the benefit of the fundamental law of nature established by the Almighty on the first formation of man, "Increase and multiply," were over-working, under-feeding, and licentiousness.

The West-Indians themselves, though acknowledging that the general licentiousness operated powerfully in producing this effect, ascribed the decrease of the Black population chiefly to the numerical disproportion of the sexes, the number of the women, they alleged, being greatly inferior to that of the men. We acknowledged, indeed, that, of the original importations, the greater proportion of almost every one consisted of men. But we maintained, that in almost all our islands, more especially in the two greatest, Jamaica, and still more Barbadoes, as the numbers born of the two sexes would only shew the ordinary small deviation from a complete equality, the inequality arising from the importations must long ago have ceased to exist. The West-Indians, however, went on contending for a large inferiority of number in the women, assigning in a great degree to this the strange phenomenon that the Slaves diminished, and thereby negating the operation of those circumstances in their treatment to which we ascribed the diminution. At length, however, the establishment of a Registry gave us a nearer approximation than ever before to the real numbers of the Slaves; and then what, Sir, was proved to be the real fact? That in every one of the West-India islands, so far was it from being true that it was this alleged disproportion which prevented the increase of the Negroes, there has been in truth no such disproportion existing; and that in fact in all our islands, except the lately settled island Trinidad, the women are in greater numbers than the men. As the whole population is made up of that of the different estates and families of domestic slaves, and as every owner had an accurate account of the number of his own, it is very surprising, indeed quite unaccountable, how the hypothesis, universally prevalent and enforced on us, could be believed; and yet such was the account invariably given to us. Let this

then be a proof that we ought not to trust implicitly to the accuracy of the statements received from the West Indies. But the important inference to be drawn from the decrease of the Slaves, even under the circumstance of an equality of the sexes, is, that we must find the means of encouraging the natural increase of the Negroes, or that the Planters will lie under the strongest temptations to resort once more to the old source of the Slave Trade, carrying it on illicitly. Something must be done, to effect an entire reformation in the system, not merely with a view to justice, and humanity, but also to sound policy: for however this country may be determined not to permit the recommencement of such a traffic, the temptation to renew it, which the deficiency of Slaves would hold out, would be too much for human nature, at least for human nature in the West Indies. The Register Bills that have been enacted by the different Colonial Assemblies, are altogether inadequate to their effect. I freely confess that I cannot depend upon them for producing the desired effect of preventing the illicit importation of Negroes; and let any one who may have any doubt on this head, remember what was formerly stated by the Colonial Assemblies themselves, that if the Abolition Law should be passed, it would be practically impossible to enforce it.

There are only two other matters on which I am anxious to say a few words. First, I entirely concur with my right honourable friend in thinking, that it is highly to be wished that the conversion of the Slaves into a free peasantry should rather be the gradual effect of the operation of moral causes, than that it should be suddenly effected by an Act of Parliament. But he will allow me also to tell him, and to tell the House, that when we consider the claims of these unhappy people, and the time that has been already lost in accomplishing this great and high duty, we ought not to prolong their slavery an hour longer than is absolutely necessary, with a view to their own benefit, as well as to the interests of other parties. I believe most sincerely that any reform which should convert the Slaves into a free

peasantry would be no less advantageous to the planters themselves than to those who are at present in bondage to them. Still it is deserving of serious consideration, whether it would be either wise, or just, or prudent, to leave to time the emancipation of the Slaves, allowing it to become general merely by the operation of principles such as have been alluded to ; or whether it would not be fit to adopt something like the plan recommended about thirty years ago by the late Lord Melville, and which, if carried into effect, would have left at this time scarcely a single Slave in the whole of our West-Indian possessions. I cannot reflect that this plan was not carried into effect, without deep concern. But there is another point of extreme importance on which practically all parties ought to agree. It is, whether the improving of the condition of the Negroes ought to be the work of the British Parliament, or whether it ought to be left to the Colonial Legislatures ? For myself, I frankly confess, that if the Colonial Legislatures would make the reform, I should greatly prefer it. But how is it possible for me to expect that they will do it ? Have we not large experience on this head ; and does not all our experience shew, that they will not do their duty ? Do we not remember that, from the first moment when any proceedings were commenced for the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves, the Colonial Legislatures invariably opposed every endeavour of the kind ? There were no consequences so fatal, no injuries so great, that were not in the first instance predicted as certain to be the effect of any interference, even to lessen the horrors of the Middle Passage ; by which, it may be now necessary to state, was meant the conveyance of the wretched victims from Africa to the West Indies. Let me also call to the recollection of the House, that such was the case, not only when propositions of the kind came from persons who might be looked upon as obnoxious to the West Indians, or likely to be suspected by them, but when they were brought forward by individuals most respectable from their rank and fortune, and character,

and who had long been regarded by the planters with favour, as decidedly partial to their cause. In 1797, an honourable gentleman now sitting opposite to me (Mr. C. Ellis), who had shewed a disinterested spirit of benevolence towards the Negroes on his own properties, wished to prevail on the Colonists to adopt some general reforms. The personal efforts he had used, and the sacrifices he had made, were a testimony of his unquestionable sincerity. He was desirous of introducing a reform, that, if carried into execution, he hoped might have had the happiest results. But he wished his reform to be patronised and carried into effect by the Legislatures of the West Indies. The consequence was, that all his exertions were ineffectual; and that though his application was enforced by the most powerful of all pleas, viz. that, if they did not reform the system themselves, the British Parliament would infallibly pass the much dreaded Abolition Law, yet even with this enforcement, the Colonial Assemblies would do nothing. Again; it is not to be forgotten, that Mr. Bryan Edwards, the historian of the West Indies, and one of their chief champions, himself suggested the reform of one of the greatest practical grievances of the West Indies, viz. that of the Slaves being liable to be seized, and separately and even singly sold for the payment of their master's debts; and also the abolition of the Sunday market. He stated, that it was only necessary for the former of these objects to repeal a particular law of George II. We yielded most gladly to what he recommended. The law that stood in the way of this improvement was repealed accordingly. But to this day not one of the thirteen Colonial Assemblies has verified Mr. Edwards's prediction, that, so soon as they should be able, they would redress this crying grievance. Nothing whatever has been done, and the evil still remains in all its force. Will my right honourable friend then say, that he thinks such reforms as are necessary will be fairly and practically attempted by the Assemblies of the islands? Can he think it possible that they will? I know my right honourable friend's

talents and principles so well, that I am willing to believe he will not suffer himself to be imposed upon in this respect. But let him beware; for if he does rely on them, he will assuredly be disappointed. And, let it never be forgotten, as Sir Samuel Romilly used to exclaim, these poor Negroes, destitute, miserable, unfriended; degraded as they are, are nevertheless his Majesty's liege subjects, and are entitled to as much—aye, let me remind my right honourable friend, by the principles of our holy religion, to more—of the protection of the British Constitution, *because* they are deserted, destitute, and degraded. On this very account, they have a peculiar claim to our sympathy and protection. The great and the powerful, the noble and the affluent, ought to feel it their special duty to extend their aid to the weak, the helpless, and the oppressed. The object, I trust, will be accomplished in one way or another: Slavery is a great moral evil, and a great physical suffering; and I trust that, ere long, means will be found to put an end to it. It is impossible, in the present state of the world, and with all the knowledge that has broken in upon us, to suppose that Slavery can exist much longer.

I do not wish to enter into any invidious topics; though I confess my right honourable friend almost tempted me to do so, when he took upon himself to compare the state of the Slaves of antiquity with the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies. Let me remind him at least of one difference between the two: that among the ancients it was not in general difficult for the Slave, by his industry or by his good conduct, to obtain his emancipation in a few years; but we all know the extreme difficulty of doing so in the West Indies: we all know how in fact, of late, obstacles have been thrown in the way of individual manumissions. But upon this point I do not wish at this time to go into any unnecessary discussion. I will only, therefore, in conclusion, remind the House and my right honourable friend, that the grand point to be kept in mind is, that the great changes that are contemplated, and the

benefits resulting from them, must not only be recommended strongly to the Colonial Assemblies; but the Government at home must see them carried into effect. It is a part of the duty of Government to see that what is held out in the resolutions is in truth performed. I do not wish to state what is invidious; but it is necessary that something should be mentioned on this head, because I must say, without reserve, that hitherto neither Government nor Parliament itself has done its duty.

On the whole, I congratulate my honourable friend (Mr. F. Buxton) on the degree of success which has thus far attended his motion. He has made his appeal to the House and to the Country; and that appeal has not only been heard with attention, but has created the most general and lively interest. Let us hope and trust that my right honourable friend will pursue his course, the course he has declared that he will pursue; and that the benefits he wishes to be communicated to these unhappy beings may, in fact and practically, be secured to them. After all that my right honourable friend has conceded, I know not what my honourable friend proposes to do as to the motion he has made; but it may be observed, that we now stand in a perfectly new situation, entirely different from that in which we stood at the time of our entering the House, and when the motion was brought forward. Let it be remembered, that we have now an acknowledgment on the part of Government that the grievances of which we complain do exist, and that a remedy ought to be applied. We have also the assurance that a remedy shall be applied. This state of things must give the utmost satisfaction to my honourable friend, and to all those who feel interested in the success of his object; and under these circumstances, I will no longer detain the House, than by expressing my confidence that we shall this night lay the foundation of what will ultimately prove a great and glorious superstructure.

Mr. ELLIS.—There is something so fascinating in the pe-

cular character of the eloquence of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, the topics also on which he has dwelt in his speech are calculated to appeal so forcibly to all the best feelings of his hearers, that it requires no ordinary effort to rise in opposition to him on such a subject. But though I am sufficiently conscious of this disadvantage, and of the still greater disadvantage of my own insufficiency, I feel myself called upon by a yet stronger sense of duty towards the class of persons to which I belong, whose interests are deeply implicated in this question, to stand up in support of their rights and in vindication of their characters. For, notwithstanding the declaration with which the honourable gentleman who made this motion commenced his speech, I must take the liberty of saying, that he did not very cautiously abstain from imputations of no light or uninvincible character; and I trust, therefore, that the motive which impels me thus to claim the indulgence of the House will induce them not to withhold it.

In standing up, as I do, on behalf of the planters of the West Indies, and as one of that body, I beg not to be considered as the champion of Slavery. As a West-India planter, I do not hold myself in any degree responsible for the establishment of that system. The planters of the present generation, most of them at least, found themselves, by inheritance, or by other accidental causes, in possession of property the fruit of the industry of their ancestors or other predecessors, and of capital vested in the West Indies by them, under the sanction of the Government and of the Parliament of this country, through their encouragement, and in reliance on their good faith. Thus circumstanced,—their own property, and that of their nearest connexions, intimately bound up with, and dependent upon, the existence of the scheme of society established in the Colonies,—what were the duties which these circumstances imposed upon them? I conceive them to have been—to administer that system with liberality—to exercise the power placed in their hands with

lenity and humanity ;—in a word, to do all that depended on them, consistently with their own safety and the security of their property, to mitigate and progressively to improve the condition of the Negroes. If they have failed in these duties, they have incurred a fearful responsibility, and to a higher Tribunal than this House. But for the establishment of Slavery, for the inherent vice of the system, for that original sin, they are not responsible : the responsibility attaches upon the Government who framed the system, and upon the Parliaments which have repeatedly sanctioned it, and who framed and have upheld it, for views of British policy. For be it remembered always, in treating this question, that our colonial system was not established for the sake of the Colonies, but for the encouragement of British commerce and manufactures ; for the purpose, to use the words of the Navigation Act, “ of rendering his Majesty’s Plantations beyond seas beneficial and advantageous to this kingdom, in the employment of English ships and English seamen.” It is the same with respect to the Slave Trade. The Slave Trade, in its origin, had no reference to our Colonies : there are on record Slave-trade voyages, anterior to the period of our possession of the West-India Colonies : it has been carried on for its own sake, and in order to supply foreign countries with Slaves ; and the British Parliament has invariably treated it as a part of that system of navigation and commerce upon which our naval power mainly rested, and with which the interests of the Colonies were connected only as secondary and subservient, and as being instrumental to the support of those great paramount British objects. Parliament, for nearly a century and a half, encouraged, watched over, and regulated that trade, not as was the case from the period when the honourable Member for Bramber undertook the subject for purposes of mercy towards the unhappy victims of it, but for the purpose of securing to British subjects the exclusive profits of the traffic, and in order to render it, under our navigation laws, one of the means of our maritime strength. Parlia-

ment enacted, that no Slave ships should be admitted into our Colonies but from British ports; that they should be British built, and navigated by three fourths British seamen. Let not Parliament then suppose, that it can throw off from itself, and fix upon the planters in the Colonies, the responsibility for this long course of crime. The planters, even if they can be considered as participators in the crime of the Slave Trade, must be acknowledged to have been seduced into it by the mother country. For the establishment of Slavery, therefore, they are in no degree responsible: it was exclusively the work of the Government and Parliament of Great Britain; and whatever may be the sacrifice involved in a due atonement for it, they are bound to take it upon themselves. They have no right to inflict it upon the Colonies.

It is admitted, on the part of those who bring forward this proposition, or at least it has been declared, that it is not their intention to injure or destroy the property of the planters. All *they* ask is, the fair protection promised under the faith of Parliament: Parliament is bound to fulfil its duty equally to both parties—to the Slaves and to the Planters. We are bound not to allow a natural propensity to indulge an amiable feeling of humanity, to lead us away from the discharge, however irksome or inconvenient, of the obligations of justice: still less should we be warranted in permitting an intemperate zeal, in the performance of the one duty, to lead us into a course which would produce the violation of both of them. The force of this obligation has been fully admitted by the honourable gentleman on the other side, and especially by the honourable Member for Bramber, in the speech in which he called the attention of the House to the subject early in the present session; he then admitted, that we had not a right “to pay a debt of African humanity with West-Indian property.” (See Appendix C.) All I ask of him, and of the House, is the equal performance of these duties: I would even be content to rest the decision of this question, and my whole argument on behalf of the West-India planters, on the

fair fulfilment of one of them; namely, the duty which this country owes to the Negroes. I entreat the House to recollect that liberty, though the greatest of all political blessings, is a blessing capable of being abused, if conferred on persons not fitted to receive it; and abused to the injury of those very persons upon whom it is bestowed. If the result of emancipation were to be, as at this moment it would probably be in Jamaica, or in any other of the islands, where there are the means of subsistence in the mountains abundantly sufficient for all the wants of savage life, and when there would exist no stimulus to labour but such as arises from the artificial wants of civilized society; if the result were to be, that the Negroes on their emancipation were to betake themselves to the mountains—to revert to their former habits of savage life—if, forgetting the doctrines and truths of Christianity as yet but recently and imperfectly inculcated, they were to relapse into their former superstition—if, abandoning the habits of peaceful industry, they were to have recourse to plunder and violence for subsistence; if such were to be the result of emancipation, let me ask whether we should have performed our duty towards the Negroes.

I conceive our duty to be very different—to be more difficult and more complicated. I conceive it to be—so to prepare them, by religious instruction, by the gradual acquisition of civil rights, and by the habits of civilized life, that the influence of those habits may be substituted for the authority of the master whenever that authority shall be withdrawn; that they may become honest, peaceable, moral, and industrious members of a free society, and that the transition may take place without a convulsion. In a word, I conceive the only means of making atonement for the original crime of the Slave Trade, and the establishment of Slavery, to be, through the benefits which we may thus confer on the progeny of those upon whom we inflicted the original injury.

It is, because, in my opinion, the resolutions proposed

by the honourable Member would not have the magic power of effecting this object—because, I think, the consequence of adopting them must inevitably be to produce results in direct opposition to the purpose which I have no doubt the honourable gentleman and his friends have in view—because I am satisfied that the resolutions, if passed, would operate like a proclamation of enfranchisement—because the declaration that their liberty had been withheld from them, contrary to the principles of Christianity and the British Constitution, could not fail to be considered by the Slaves as an admission of their right to assert their liberty by whatever means of violence might be in their power, that I must protest against this work being undertaken by this House. If this House were to resort to compulsory enactments, producing resistance on the part of the Colonies, whether their resistance should arise from unreasonable apprehensions, or our enactments should originate in ignorance of the feelings and habits of the inhabitants of the West Indies; whichever party might be in the wrong, it matters not: if you were to hold up to the Negroes the spectacle of the British Parliament legislating in their favour, and the Colonial Assemblies resisting the benevolent intentions of Parliament; would not the Negroes consider the British Parliament as their benefactors, and the Colonial Assemblies as their oppressors? And could the existence of such a feeling be by possibility consistent with contentment, or long even with submission?

I conceive that it is not fair or just to say, with the honourable Member who spoke last, that the House is driven to this extremity because the Colonial Legislatures proceed so slowly in the work of amelioration. I beg the honourable gentleman and the House to reflect what has been the rate of progress by which the peasantry of Europe have arrived at their present condition from their former state of villeinage; how large a portion of Europe is, even at this moment, inhabited by a population which, if somewhat raised in the scale of society above the Ne-

groes of the West Indies, are scarcely in a less degree depressed below the state of freedom which is enjoyed by the subjects of the Crown of Great Britain. It is therefore only fair to consider how far a slow progress may be essential to a peaceable transition from slavery to freedom, at all times and in all countries; and we must not forget how much the difficulties are complicated and increased, and the dangers augmented, I should say, almost incalculably, in the case of our Colonies, by the difference of colour—by the feelings and prejudices associated with that distinction—by the overpowering numbers and physical force of the Slave population as compared with the White inhabitants of the colonies—and by the great political power which must of necessity be conveyed by an equal participation in all the civil rights which are enjoyed by British subjects under our free constitution.

After taking into account all these considerations, and giving due weight to the complications introduced into the question, by the fears of the one party, and the claims of the other, we shall find that this is a problem, perhaps, of more difficult solution than any that was ever submitted to the legislature of any country. It is only by looking fairly at this difficulty, that we can judge the right which we have to charge the colonial legislatures with being culpably slow in the progress which they have made. (See Appendix D.)

Perhaps I might be justified in resting their defence solely upon these general grounds; but as reference has been made by the honourable Member who spoke last to an Address adopted by the House, on a motion which I had the honour to make in 1797, and as he has taken occasion to reproach the Assemblies of the islands with having paid little attention to the appeal then made to them, I feel myself rather personally called upon to advert somewhat more particularly to this part of the subject. I will frankly admit that the sanguine expectations in which I at that time indulged (I was then a very young man) have not been altogether realized: I admit

that I think more might and ought to have been done : I believe that more may, and I trust will be done by the Colonial Legislatures, when applied to, as there is reason to believe they will now be applied to, by the Government at home.

But while I make these admissions, I trust I may be allowed to state, on the other hand, that it is not quite fair to say nothing has been done by the Colonial Legislatures ; and that much of the reproach which has been cast upon them has been unmerited. In confirmation of this assertion, I beg leave to notice some of the enactments which have been passed in the Assembly of Jamaica, with a view to the improvement of the condition of the Negroes. I am sorry to trouble the House by going into these details ; but after the appeal which has been made to me, and after the reproaches to which I have referred, deeply implicating the characters of most respectable persons, I feel that I am in a manner compelled to enter into them. In the same year in which the Address which I have mentioned was voted by this House, in 1797, an Act was passed by the Assembly of Jamaica, with a view of promoting the religious instruction of the Negroes, and of affording further encouragement to respectable clergymen to establish themselves in Jamaica. In this Act it was made part of the duty of the curates and rectors of every parish to attend for a certain time on every Sunday in their churches, for the purpose of affording religious instruction to the Negroes or Persons of Colour who might be disposed to receive it. A fund was at the same time established for the maintenance of the widows of the deceased clergy. In the years 1801, 1807, 1809, and 1816, the consolidated Slave Laws were passed, forming a consecutive series of revisions of the Slave Laws from 1787 ; each revised law containing new regulations in favour of the Negroes. In the last law, passed in 1816, some clauses were inserted specially for the purpose of meeting some of the objections urged in this country against the colonial codes : one of them furnishing new

facilities to manumission by will, and providing protection for any Negroes detained in any jail or workhouse, alleging themselves to be free ; and making it imperative upon the senior magistrate to summon a special session for the investigation of such allegation.

This last revision of the Slave Laws was preceded by a Committee of the House of Assembly, who made a long and elaborate Report, in which they recommended, First, the prohibition of the sale of Slaves under writs of *venditioni exponas* ; next, the prohibiting the purchase of Slaves by middle-men,—a very improper practice, and one which certainly required a remedy ; and, thirdly, the enlarging of the powers of vestries as a council of protection, and the placing under their care the cases of all Negroes who might have cause of complaint against their masters. The two last of these recommendations were adopted by the Assembly. The first of them was taken into consideration by the House, with every disposition to amend the law ; but it was found to involve difficulties that had not been foreseen by the Committee—difficulties of a legal character, which the Assembly were not able to surmount. The Committee had also taken into their consideration the question of attaching the Negroes to the soil. The difficulties attending the enactment of a law of this nature are stated fully in their Report. The objections were such as either had reference to the inconveniences which might result from it in point of law, or to the hardship which the Negroes themselves might occasionally suffer, from being attached to a barren and unproductive spot. With respect to the enactment of this law, and the repeal of that of *venditioni exponas*, I have only to say, that if the honourable gentleman can obtain a solution of the legal difficulties from his Majesty's Attorney-General, or from the noble lord who presides in the court of Chancery ; and, if the inconveniences affecting the Negroes themselves cannot be obviated ; I think I may venture to say, no objections will be made of any other character—certainly

none on the part of the West-India Planters, connected with their own immediate interests. (See Appendix E.)

But this is not all that has been done by the Assembly. In 1817, a Law was also passed to make it imperative on every overseer or manager of an estate to give information to the coroner of the death of any Slave who may die otherwise than according to the common course of nature. In 1816, also, an Act was passed for the appointment of a curate in each parish with a salary of 300*l.* for the purpose of promoting the religious instruction of the Slaves. It was notified to the Assembly that this provision of 300*l.* currency (something more than 200*l.* sterling) was inadequate. The Assembly did not say, as they might have done, that the sum so provided was more than double the amount of the generality of curacies in this country, and even equal to the amount of many livings; but with great liberality they immediately increased the salary to 500*l.* currency.

If gentlemen should say, as has been not unfrequently the practice, that these enactments are a dead letter, I must beg leave most positively to deny the truth of such an allegation; and I appeal to the general improvement which has, as I understand, taken place in the condition of the Black population, in proof of the correctness of my assertion. In 1805, when I was myself in Jamaica, the treatment of the Slaves, I can venture to assert from my own observations, was such as reflected credit on the liberality and humanity of their masters; and I have been informed, and from authority which I cannot doubt, that since that period a further and very considerable improvement has taken place both in the habits and behaviour of the Negroes, and in their treatment by the White inhabitants. Since that period also, nearly the whole Negro population of Jamaica have been baptized; and I am further informed, that in many districts marriages have become very frequent among them. I do not state these improvements, as claiming any great credit on behalf of the Legislature of

Jamaica ; but I think I am justified in saying, that they bear me out in the assertion, that a general and progressive improvement, has been, and is still, going on in that country. (See Appendix F.)

With respect to many of the regulations alluded to by the honourable gentleman who opened this debate, I believe that no objection will be offered on the part of the planters in the West Indies. For instance, as to the regulation for securing to the Negro by law, that property which he now possesses through custom only, I think I can venture to say, there will not be made the slightest objection. With regard also to a point which has been made the subject of great reproach—I mean what is commonly termed the driving system—I must beg leave to say, I do not believe, however confidently it may have been asserted, that the whip is used as a stimulant to labour. I believe it will be found that the whip is generally placed in the hands of the driver—who is always a confidential Negro—more as a badge of authority, than as an instrument of coercion. I admit, that it may be—as the appellation denotes—the remnant of a barbarous custom. But it is, in fact, considered at present only as a symbol of office. (See Appendix G.) It is not, however, of importance now to discuss this point ; for I am persuaded the planters will make no objection whatever to the prohibition by law of its use for either purpose.

With respect to another practice, the indecent punishment of females with the whip, there can be no doubt as to the propriety of passing a law for its prohibition. With regard to the abolition of Sunday markets, and the affording equivalent time to the Negroes to work on their own account, I have no hesitation in saying, that the planters would readily agree to such a proposition, provided that the means of employing the time so given up to the Negroes, in religious instruction, can, as I trust it will, be afforded. (See Appendix H.)—With respect to some other points adverted to by the honourable Member, I fear serious objections, and greater practical difficulties than he is

himself aware of, may be found to exist. I have, however, no doubt, but that the West-India planters will consent to every fair and reasonable proposal for the improvement of the condition of the Slaves. But gentlemen must not be surprised if modifications of detail, which may not have occurred to them, should be found essential to the safe or beneficial adoption of such improvements in the colonies. It is with great reluctance that I trouble the House by going into these details; but there is another point on which so much stress has been laid, that I cannot pass it over. Much obloquy has been cast upon the colonies on account of the general inattention paid to religious duties in those countries, and the licentious habits both of the Black and White inhabitants. I am far from meaning to be the apologist of such a state of manners; but I must beg it to be recollected, that, among other paramount rights which the mother country has retained, she has included that of the superintendence and patronage of the Church Establishment in the colonies. She has undertaken to provide them with religious instruction; she has placed the clergy under the jurisdiction of an English bishop; and she has given to the Governor of each colony, who is appointed by the Crown, the nomination of all the livings. The sole and single duty left to the colonies is the charge of providing salaries for the clergy. If that duty has been discharged by them with a degree of liberality which sets all reproach at defiance;—if that very liberality has operated as a temptation to the abuse of the patronage so reserved by this country;—if clergymen have been selected with less regard to their fitness for the due performance of their religious duties than to their need of the large profits of the livings; and if the clergy, so appointed, did not pay that attention to the moral and religious instruction of the Negroes which they ought to have done, and which all admit to be so desirable; if they have not obtained that influence over, and that respect from, the White inhabitants of the colonies, which belongs to their sacred character, I ask where does the responsibility attach for

the bad state of morals of a society so neglected, as to that point upon which the morality of all society must depend? (See Appendix I.) I do not mean to insinuate, that such complaints can be truly urged against the clergy in the colonies at the present moment: I believe, on the contrary, that the church patronage, in the island of Jamaica at least, is judiciously bestowed by the noble Duke at the head of the government there; and I beg leave to offer to the right reverend prelate, under whom the clergy are at present placed, the humble tribute of my gratitude for the zeal and interest which he has shewn in furthering the religious instruction of the Slaves. But the present state of morals and manners in the West Indies, is the fruit of seed sown long ago, and not easily nor speedily to be eradicated. Be the responsibility, however, as to the cause, where it may, the duty of remedying the evil, I agree, is not the less urgent. But that remedy is not to be found in the emancipation of the Negroes. No mode of arguing can be more fallacious, nor, I must take the liberty of saying, more unfair, than to cite the bad state of morals in the West Indies, as a reason for the enfranchisement of the Slaves. It may be an argument *ad invidiam*, a powerful means of exciting feelings prejudicial to the inhabitants of the colonies, but it can be no reason for emancipation. Emancipation is not the only, nor the best remedy—as that argument would imply—the best, and, I will venture to say, the only remedy for the present state of morals in the colonies, is the influence of religion. Emancipation, I contend, has not, *per se*, any tendency to remedy the evil. The utmost state of moral licentiousness, we all know, is compatible with the utmost degree of political freedom. And freedom, if given to the Negroes before they are fitted to receive it, would only confirm and aggravate the evil. (See Appendix K.) We must therefore look to another course. The only course, as I conceive, consistent alike with the duties of real humanity towards the Negroes, and of justice towards the proprietors in the colonies, is that recommended in the Resolu-

tions of my right honourable friend. In pursuing that course, the Government are entitled to the fair and honest co-operation of the West Indians in this country, and in the colonies; and I trust that the confidence which will be inspired by the able and statesmanlike manner in which my right honourable friend has treated this question, will ensure the application to the Colonists not being made in vain. Time was, when I should have hazarded the anticipation that such a course would have also met with the approbation of honourable gentlemen most particularly interested in favour of the Africans. That course is indeed pointed out and described with equal distinctness and eloquence, by a writer supposed to be the organ of their sentiments; and an authority to which I am particularly glad to be able to appeal, as not being liable to the suspicion of any undue partiality to the West-Indians. In describing the views of the Abolitionists, in respect to the future emancipation of the Negroes, he says,—“ They did not aim at an emancipation to be effected by insurrection in the West Indies, or to be ordained precipitately by positive law: but they never denied, and scrupled not to avow, that they did look forward to a future extinction of Slavery in the colonies, to be accomplished *by the same happy means which formerly put an end to it in England*; namely, by a benign, though insensible, revolution in opinions and manners, by the encouragement of particular manumissions, and the progressive melioration of the condition of the Slaves, till it should *slide insensibly* into general freedom. They looked, in short, to an emancipation, of which *not the Slaves, but the masters*, should be the willing instruments or authors.” p. 8.

The writer then goes on to describe the particular mode in which the extinction of Slavery was accomplished in England.

“ In England, if it be asked what cause most powerfully contributed to the dissolution of the degrading bondage of our ancestors, the answer must clearly be, The extreme favour shewn to individual enfranchisements by

the judges and the laws. That baneful growth of foreign conquest, or early barbarism, *villainage*, had nearly overspread the whole field now covered with the most glorious harvest of liberty and social happiness that ever earth produced, and where not one specimen of the noxious weed remains; yet it was *not ploughed up by revolution*, or mown down by the *scythes of a Legislative Abolition*, but was plucked up, *stalk by stalk*, by the progressive hand of *private and voluntary* enfranchisement. Slavery ceased in England only because the last Slave at length obtained his manumission, or died without a child." p. 40.

I would recommend this text to my right honourable friend and his colleagues for their guidance, in the prosecution of the great work which they have now undertaken. He will find it in the eighth and the fortieth pages of the Report of the African Institution, published in the year 1815. I will only add, that to the extinction of Slavery, so to be accomplished—namely, "by the same happy means as in England," with the same regard to private property, and a similar maintenance of the public tranquillity,—I not only have no objection to offer, but, with such limited means as I possess, I should feel bound to lend my humble support. (See Appendix L.)

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH.—Notwithstanding there may have been something objectionable in the tone and manner of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Ellis), I have on this account nothing to retort, but I am ready to give him all imaginable credit for the sentiments he has himself declared, and on which, I hope, he has consulted the opinions of a large number of persons, who in a resistance to a proposition of this nature would be extremely ready to join him. In many of the facts he has stated, and in much of the reasoning he has advanced, I am much disposed to agree, and in nothing more than what was insisted upon so strongly by my honourable friend, who began this debate, that this, the first, and every other step towards emancipation must be gradual. But still

there is this great distinction between us, more material than I wish it were, that while I admit, on the one hand, that the emancipation of the Negroes must be gradual, I think at the same time it is absolutely necessary that it should be rendered certain. It is upon the uncertainty of what has been proposed to us this night by the right honourable gentleman on the other side, that I feel myself most dissatisfied. The honourable gentleman who spoke last has referred to a measure taken by himself, or at his suggestion, many years ago, which unquestionably did him great honour at the time: he has acknowledged, that, because the execution of his proposition was left to the Legislatures of the West Indies, it did not effect all the good he had intended towards the Negroes. Now, on this particular point, I must beg leave to call the attention of the House, and of the right honourable gentleman, to a circumstance which he may have forgotten. On the 19th June, 1816, an honourable relative of the honourable gentleman on the other side, proposed a Resolution, from the conclusion of which I will read the following words: "And that his Royal Highness will be pleased to recommend, in the strongest manner, to the local authorities in the respective Colonies, to carry into effect every measure which may tend to promote the moral and religious improvement as well as the comfort and happiness of the Negroes." Here then we get into this dilemma; either the Colonial Assemblies have carried those ameliorating measures into effect, or they have not: if they have not, it may arise from one of two causes;—either that the parties were inattentive to the recommendation so strongly urged by this Government; or that they saw the moral and religious improvement, and the comfort and happiness of the Negroes, with eyes very different from those with which Parliament contemplated them. I should wish to know, then, what greater security we have at this moment for effective exertions on the part of the West-Indian Legislatures, if we adopt the Resolution of the right honourable gentleman which has just been proposed. We may:

again declare, "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave population of his Majesty's colonies:" but are we sure that it will be of any use to declare it? After the adoption of the former Resolution which I have just noticed, we received information from the best authority that the laws passed in the West Indies were, even *avowedly* among themselves, only to gain time, and to quiet the Parliament and People of England.

[The honourable Member read a quotation from the document he referred to, and then proceeded.]

What I have to ask is this: Have the important objects, so recommended, been accomplished within the last seven years, or have they not? Nay, I will ask a question much more home: Has *any one* of the propositions mentioned to-night as almost a *sine qua non*, with a view to the improvement of the condition of the Negro, been put even in a train of accomplishment in the West Indies? The fact is, that when the returns from the Colonies were laid upon the table the other day, (which, allow me to say, ought to have been there long since, having been ordered two years ago), I turned over the book, expecting, of course, to find the proper return from Jamaica; and it was not till after I had gone through it twice, that I could persuade myself, which I did very reluctantly, that it was really wanting. Not one word from that most important of all the islands. (See Appendix M.) And yet without that return we must take what has been done, merely upon the representations of the honourable gentleman: I mean what has been done, among other things, for the moral and religious improvement of the Negroes. I hold in my hand a Jamaica Gazette, dated no longer ago than in November last, in which it appears that a Committee of the House of Assembly reported, that, excepting in two or three large parishes, it had not been found that the measures taken for the religious improvement of the Blacks had been attended with success. As far as my own private information goes, I may say, that those measures have been attended with very

little advantage indeed. I am afraid it will be found that the expectations of the British Parliament, so far from being realized, have been grievously disappointed, and that, as to moral cultivation, the cause has gone as much backward in some cases as forward in others: so far too from any facilities having been given to manumission, it is now more difficult than it was at any former period.

It concerned me much to hear the honourable gentleman who spoke last, so openly object to any interference on this subject by the British Parliament. He was opposed to all interference and almost protested against it.

Mr. Ellis [interposed]—My observations were directed against the policy and consequences of interference.

Mr. William Smith.—I understood him to protest, or to say what nearly amounted to a protest, against any interference on the part of the Legislature here on behalf of the Slaves. If I was mistaken, I am glad of it; and I would rather take his interpretation of his own words, than attempt to put my own sense upon them. But if we are to be threatened with consequences, and to be talked to of the impolicy of interference on the part of the British Parliament, if the proceedings of the Colonists should be too dilatory and inefficient to meet the just expectations of this country; and if we are to forbear because we are so threatened, I fear that the conclusion of our undertaking for the benefit of the Negroes is by no means so near as we could desire. During the first period of our labours, we know, from the honourable gentleman himself, that they did not satisfy his own expectations; and, during the latter period, we are equally sure that they did not satisfy ours. What better ground of confidence do we now possess? I must indeed think that, after all we have seen upon this subject, after all the experience we have had, during a long series of years, we are entitled to demand some greater security than the right honourable gentleman, in his Resolutions, has given us.

It is not my intention at this period, and after what has been already said, to go into details; but I feel disposed

to contend against some of the most material points adverted to by the honourable gentleman. As to the first settlement of the colonies, it is a long way indeed for the honourable gentleman to look back ; and I confess I see no necessity for it, since it makes nothing for his argument. I shall not follow him thither ; but when he tells us, that the emancipation of the villeins, and the destruction of feudal tenures, was the work of many ages, I must ask whether gentlemen really do think that *now*, in the nineteenth century, we are to make no quicker progress in the annihilation of Slavery ? and when we know too, that it is held in detestation by the whole British people ? Have we no additional lights to guide us in 1823, beyond those which were possessed in 1400 ? We know, in point of fact, that at that time the trade in Slaves between Bristol and Ireland had scarcely ceased. In the 13th century, it is an unquestionable fact, that Englishmen were kidnapped on the shores of the Bristol Channel, then taken to Ireland, and there actually sold as Slaves, until the practice was put an end to by the *Irish* themselves—on account of its acknowledged inhumanity.

But I beg leave upon this, and every occasion when the opportunity offers, to enter my strongest and most indignant protest against the doctrine of treating man as the property of man ; and never will I admit that claims of a nature so immoral and extravagant, are to be treated with as much delicacy as private rights of a legitimate description. Unless we utterly reprobate this idea in the first instance, we do almost nothing ; and it is chiefly to endeavour to destroy this notion, which in some quarters seems even yet to prevail, that I have risen : very much indeed for this especial reason, do some of the propositions of my honourable friend deserve to be preferred to those of the right honourable gentleman. As long as we suffer ourselves, or any person or persons connected with us, or dependent upon us, to apprehend that it is possible to hold the same unconditional property in their fellow-men as in any other species of production—until that

opinion, destructive of all the distinctions which
 ighty has established between man and brute, is
 d so completely that not a trace of it shall remain,
 arch of amelioration in the condition of the Negroes
 a slow indeed.

aving said thus much, I will content myself with re-
 ing, that I entreat the right honourable gentleman to
 us a little more information as to the time when this
 elioration, according to his Resolutions, may be expect-
 to take place; and as to the security on which he rests
 at, without the interference of Parliament, it will ever,
 at any definite period, however distant, receive its accom-
 plishment.

The Right Honourable Sir GEORGE ROSE said, that
 although the turn the debate had taken induced him to
 address himself to the House far more briefly than he had
 originally intended, there still were considerations which
 he deemed it indispensable to lay before it. These arose
 from the altered state of Christianity amongst the Slave
 population of the British West-India settlements, which,
 whilst it is by no means such as it undoubtedly ought to be,
 is yet not so hopeless as it has been represented, and by
 no mean authorities. Even the University of Cambridge,
 in its petition, has declared, in speaking of the Negroes,
 that "religious instruction is nearly altogether precluded,"
 —a statement in no wise warranted by the case. He
 begged the House, however, to believe, that very far
 from considering the progress made, as that which ought
 to satisfy those interested in that highly important matter,
 he looked upon it but as the earnest of what remains
 to be done by the West-Indian proprietors, and as
 proof of what may be effected. Being by inheritance
 of these proprietors, he had, from the moment of be-
 ing such, felt the immensity of the responsibility
 devolved upon him as charged with the spiritual well-
 being of the Negroes on the property in question; the small
 course no measure of that respon-

and he was led to state circumstances which had occurred to himself, as testifying powerfully to the beneficent effects of religious instruction, both to the Slaves themselves, and to their owners. Inheriting a small landed property in one of the lesser islands, he at once ascertained that, both from local circumstances, and from the duties of the parochial clergy to their White and Coloured flocks, and from their being too highly educated for the missionary task among human beings so utterly ignorant, narrow-minded, and thoughtless, as the unconverted Negroes are, he could not obtain spiritual aid for them from the clergy of the Church of England. He then solicited it of the Moravian Brethren; doing so with the concurrence of respectable persons in the island, whose co-operation he was most anxious to obtain for the success of his views, as he knew how favourably they were impressed with regard to that very respectable and meritorious sect. Circumstances foreign to himself, but in which the pious and excellent persons to whom he addressed himself were blameless, rendered this application unsuccessful: there then remained no other source of religious instruction but that of the Wesleyan Mission. This was the one he was the least inclined to address himself to, on account of the strong feelings against them which he knew to exist in the bosoms of those whose co-operation was most important to the attainment of his views; but as no other resource remained, and the choice was between heathenism in its worst shape, and Christianity as preached by a Protestant sect, he could not hesitate a moment what to do. He was bound to say, that the Wesleyan Committee had met his wish for missionary aid with distinguished readiness, piety, and liberality. From his intercourse with its members, and his increasing knowledge of the operations of its servants, and of the subject in general, he had no less reason to be surprised, when, on the responsibility for the conduct of two other estates in Jamaica devolving in a great degree upon him, at a subsequent period, he found a state of things which was sufficiently in-

structive. On one of these estates, the best and the largest, the Negroes, though baptized, were in every other respect completely heathen ; grossly depraved and immoral ; and its affairs very disadvantageously circumstanced.

The condition of the other estate was decidedly better. It is in the immediate neighbourhood of one of the stations of the Wesleyan missionaries, whose labours had led the far greater part of the Black population to real and practical Christianity. He had ascertained that, in the year 1821, of 120 males, ten were found to be of conduct more or less reprehensible, and had been punished ; of 130 females, one alone had received reprehension and punishment : and the attorney of the estate, a man of very respectable character, speaking of the great improvement in the morals and conduct of the Negroes within a few years, says, that " this improvement is so decisive, and the progressive discontinuation of punishment so marked, that he has a confident hope that punishment will die away, and be extinguished at no distant period ; and that the beneficial effects are to be attributed almost exclusively to the labours of the Wesleyan missionaries,"—men whose zeal for the cause of their Master, and active exertions for the weal of their fellow-creatures, he pours-trays in strong colours.

Sir G. Rose observed, that enough had now been said to shew the practicability of effecting the conversion of the Negroes, by following up the beginning thus made ; that, besides these considerations of the highest nature, there can be no doubt of the power of Christianity alone to effect the objects of the House in favour of the Negroes, when it shall be general in the West Indies ; that slavery cannot stand against real and universal Christianity ; that obstacles to the emancipation of the Slaves, now multiplied and most serious, must vanish before it ; that he could, were it not to trespass too much on the time of the House, give proofs that the improved religion of the Slaves had already reflected a light upwards, and acted on classes of society above them, producing new feelings, and a new

impulse; and that in an island where the greatest progress had been made in evangelizing the Negroes, institutions were actually in progress, of which the West Indies would not have been regarded as susceptible a few years back. But he was bound to shew that he was holding out no illusive hope; a regular improvement in the feelings of the West-India proprietors and of their attorneys, was in rapid progress, as demonstrable by various facts.

The Wesleyans are excluded from no one island; and as, with respect to them alone, of all Christian teachers, have exceptions been taken, where *they* are admitted, all others assuredly are. Upon seven islands every estate is open to their missionaries; and this will be the case with an eighth, when they can occupy the ground. They have access to a third of the estates in Jamaica, and to a half of those in Dominica; and they have missions in Barbadoes. The following may be a tolerably accurate statement of the progress of conversion amongst the Slaves of the British West-Indies. There are in those settlements not quite 800,000 Slaves; of them, about 63,600 are adults under the care of the Wesleyans; and of these, a very large proportion, are not merely baptized Christians, but such in their lives; as those whose conduct is repugnant to their Christian profession are excluded from their communion. If to this number is added that of children under instruction, and children of Christian parents baptized, and who receive instruction as soon as they are capable of profiting by it, the total number of Christians aggregated to the Wesleyans may be taken at about 80,000. And if those in real communion with the Moravians, who form a considerable mass; with the Baptists in Jamaica; with the Scotch Church, and the agents of the London Missionary Society at Demarara and Berbice; and with the Church of England; are computed at 20,000, the total will be 100,000, or an eighth part of the whole. It is particularly to be observed, that besides whatever aid may be derived from other missionary sources, the Wesleyans alone, had

they sufficient pecuniary resources, could double the number of their preachers of the Gospel instantly, independently of whatever increased supply they may be able to furnish to meet a growing demand. Each of their missionaries costs them annually from 150*l.* to 250*l.*, according to the state of his family. The average may then be taken at 200*l.*, and one missionary is considered as competent to the instruction of 1000 Negroes. It is true that they wisely allow no one to pay their servants but themselves: but they accept of all contributions to their funds; and such proprietors as will contribute, either jointly with others, or separately, according to the circumstances of their estates, the means of maintaining a missionary, on the footing of expense and extent of labour specified, are sure of obtaining for their estates the spiritual labours necessary for the conversion of their Negroes.

The duty to obtain such instruction is solemn, urgent, and imperative: the facility of obtaining it is such as has now been shewn; and it is one that should be made positive and obligatory by law: and he felt an extreme anxiety that legal provision should be made to compel exertions of the landholders to procure teachers of the Gospel for the Negroes through the whole of the British West-India settlements; that returns of the progress of religious instruction should be required; and that every proprietor should at certain, and not distant periods, be obliged to shew, either such progress actually made amongst his Slaves, or that the absence of it arose from no fault of his; that he has made every practicable endeavour to promote it. (See Appendix N.)

Mr. BRIGHT.—But for the turn the debate has taken, it was my intention to have gone at full length into the subject; but after what has already passed, I shall not occupy the House for many minutes. It cannot be denied that the question is of the highest importance to the interests of a large class of his Majesty's subjects; I mean the West-

India planters; who, I think, have to complain of a good deal of unmerited obloquy thrown upon them out of doors. I believe that the conduct of the planters has been much misrepresented; that justice has not been done them generally in this country; and I believe that they have been occupied as actively as was possible, under the circumstances, in ameliorating the condition of their Slaves. I believe that by numerous authorities this could be shewn to be the fact; but I will not enter into that subject at the present moment. The West-Indians have a just right to complain that their remonstrances and representations have not been duly attended to at home, and that many misstatements have gone abroad as to the actual condition of things in the colonies. Some individuals, who have been instrumental in putting forth these misstatements, ought to have been better informed. I will read a passage from a publication upon this subject, which, as I contend, is wholly unfounded; because I will afterwards submit to the House a direct contradiction of it.

[The honourable gentleman here read a quotation from a tract in his hand, stating that the fines upon manumission had been nearly doubled.]

Now this assertion I will undertake to refute. Within two or three days, returns have been laid upon the table from nearly all the islands in the West Indies; and from these returns I will take the liberty of submitting certain results. It appears that, in the years 1808 and 1809, the tax on manumission in the island of Dominica was 100*l.*; and it is now only 16*l.* 10*s.* on Slaves born in the island: on foreign Slaves, it is 33*l.* In Jamaica, in the year 1797, the tax on manumission was 100*l.* currency; and so it continued till the year 1818: but now there is no tax on manumission; and out of 400 Slaves freed between the year 1808 and 1818, only five paid any thing for their liberation. In St. Vincent's, up to September 1820, the fine or tax was 100*l.*; but since that date there has been no fine or tax at all. Eight per cent. were paid by freemen under a former law. In Barbadoes, from 1808 to 1816, the

fine on the manumission of a female was 300*l.*, and of a male 200*l.*; and so it continued until August 1816, when the fine was repealed: since that time, 250 Slaves have been freed. In Antigua there has been no tax or fine on manumission, nor have there been any fees paid. In Tobago there is at this time no payment at all on the manumission of a Slave. In St. Christopher's there was no tax or fine on manumission from 1808 to 1821. In Tortola in 1812 there was a fine of 6*l.* 12*s.*; and under that law only fourteen paid the fine; and it expired in 1813. In Trinidad there is no tax or fine on manumission. In Demarara a large sum is sometimes imposed; but it is thrown into the Poor Fund, upon which the Slaves have a claim.

After these statements from official documents, let me ask the House if I have not made out, that in respect of manumission, in nearly all the colonies, the tax or fine has been remitted from time to time, and in some of them that it does not exist at all. What then becomes of the assertion, that the fines upon manumission have been nearly doubled? Yet that assertion was made by the honourable Member for Bramber, who, on this most important point, seems not to have looked at the returns upon the table. Have I not overturned the proposition? Have I not shewn that it is without a shadow of foundation; and that the fines upon manumission have been reduced or abolished in Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent's, Barbadoes, Antigua, Tobago, St. Christopher's, Tortola, Trinidad, and Demarara? I quoted the words of the honourable gentleman's pamphlet, and they will bear but one meaning; and I put it to any man whether that meaning is not, that at this time there are heavy fines upon manumission, and that the fines have been greatly increased. (See Appendix O.)

There are many other instances in which the West-Indians have been harshly and unfairly treated by their opponents. There is a most notorious book which has been distributed in this country, which is generally believed to be an honest and true representation of facts; but it is far

from it. I mean the book entitled, "Negro Slavery." I impute a bad intention very reluctantly to any man; but I do impute a bad intention to the man who put this book together. In that book a letter of the Rev. Mr. Cooper has been much talked of: an extract is given from it, or professed to be given from it; but I will compare Mr. Cooper's letter itself with what is said of it in the pamphlet.

[The honourable gentleman here read the quotation to which he referred.]

Does not this, let me ask, convey a very strong imputation upon the Jamaica planters? But if I can shew, as I will do, that such an imputation was not in the mind of the writer of the letter, ought it to go forth to the country with that interpretation? The real passage, as it stands in Mr. Cooper's letter, is this.

[Mr. Bright read the passage.]

I put it to the House whether what is printed in this book called "Negro Slavery," as a fair quotation, is so, or such as ought to be promulgated as the real sentiments of this respectable gentleman. (See Appendix P.)

The author of the same work goes on, in another place, to quote Dr. Williamson, a medical man, who for a long time resided in the island of Jamaica. Of course he might be conversant with scenes of the utmost distress, if they occurred there: his object was to apply remedies to the evils he witnessed, and his statement is highly creditable to the humanity of the planters of Jamaica. I will read one or two quotations from what he says, to prove what I have advanced. I admit that passages may be found to shew considerable mischief and considerable evil may exist under the present system; yet the whole result of his opinion is highly favourable to the colonists, and to their management of the Negroes.

[The honourable gentleman read several passages from the statements of Dr. Williamson.]

I could cite innumerable instances of the same kind; so that it is not fair that he should be put forward as a witness

upon the other side, and against the planters of the West Indies. (See Appendix Q.)

Mr. D. SYKES.—I am most happy to hear the statements of the honourable Member opposite (Sir G. Rose), with respect to the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies ; but I confess I should have received still greater satisfaction if the right honourable gentleman had been more explicit as to the mode, time, and manner in which the future emancipation of the Slaves is to be attained. In this respect the House is as yet left in almost total darkness. It was my intention to have taken a fuller share in to-night's debate, and to have entered largely into a subject, in my view, more interesting than any that has engaged the attention of Parliament : but after the conciliatory, and in many respects satisfactory, speech of the right honourable gentleman, I shall occupy the attention of the House for a very few minutes. The difference between the Resolutions moved by my honourable friend, and those of the right honourable gentleman, is not so wide as to call on the friends of the former for an extended discussion.

The main object of my rising is to say a few words in answer to an honourable and learned friend of mine, sitting behind me (Mr. Bright). He has thrown out some observations with respect to those engaged in discussions upon Negro Slavery out of doors. He has addressed a speech against the pamphlets of others who are not now present, and who consequently cannot be heard in support of their own statements. With regard to the author of the pamphlet entitled " Negro Slavery," my honourable and learned friend has asserted that he has misquoted Mr. Cooper. Now I confess I do not see in what manner the author of the pamphlet has misquoted him ; and, as I understand the passage, he has in substance stated the same thing. The point in dispute relates to the use of the whip ; and I really think the same sense is conveyed in both passages.

The honourable Member, after having dwelt at some length upon this pamphlet, adverted to the work of Dr. Williamson ; but my honourable and learned friend does not seem to have been more triumphant in this quotation than in the other. Dr. Williamson is a staunch friend to the system of Negro Slavery ; and the honourable Member reads a passage to the House, shewing that the result of the Doctor's observations was highly favourable to the planters of the West Indies. It is not in the least surprising that such passages are to be found in this book, which was quoted expressly as being the work of an adverse witness. But does my honourable friend mean to say, that the cart-whip is not the main organ of communication between the Negro and his owner ? Does he mean to deny that it is used to this very day ; that it is suspended over the unhappy Slaves during the time of their labour ; and that it is uninterrupted until they go to their miserable rest at night ? But facts have been stated over and over again, on this and on every other part of their case, which must have already produced their effect upon the House—more effect than all the arguments which had ever been urged by the ablest advocate for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. Were more wanting, I have now in my pocket a file of Jamaica Gazettes which would furnish them, where is advertised the sale of Negroes, together with chattels of various kinds ; and where we have lots of cattle, household furniture, and Slaves, coupled in the same advertisement.

Then with respect to property ; it is absurd to talk of it. The evidence of these unhappy beings is never taken ; and what means have they therefore of defending their property, when it is the acknowledged law of the country that the testimony of the Slave cannot be taken in a court of justice. Upon no consideration whatever is it admitted. And here let me observe the wide difference between the West-Indian Slaves and those in other parts of the world. I confess I was somewhat surprised at the comparison drawn by the right honourable gentleman be-

tween the state of these Slaves and the state of Roman Slavery; for it seems to have been entirely forgotten in this comparison, that there is this great and obvious distinction, that the Roman Slave was never excluded from giving testimony in a court of justice. I think I may state this in the most unqualified manner. In our colonies, however, the Slaves are wholly excluded from giving such testimony.

I did not rise to enter into any detail on this question, but rather to express my pleasure that this subject is now in the hands of Ministers. I hope that they will keep a watchful eye over the colonial legislatures. But I must say, that if the right honourable gentleman places much confidence in their exertions, I fear he will be most grievously disappointed.

Mr. Bright said a few words in explanation, which were inaudible.

Mr. MARRYAT.—It is far from my wish, Sir, to detain the House; but I am anxious to correct a mistake into which the honourable Member opposite has fallen. I understood the honourable Member for Hull to say, that the evidence of Negro Slaves is wholly excluded from courts of justice in the West Indies. Now I feel it my duty to set him and the House right upon this point. In how many other islands the testimony of Slaves is admitted I know not; but this I well know, that no longer ago than 1818, a law passed in the island of Dominica, making the evidence of Slaves admissible; and I am happy to state further, that this law has been taken into consideration by the Committee of West-India planters and merchants in this metropolis; and they having found that no inconvenience has arisen from that experiment in Dominica, I have every reason to believe, that, under their recommendation, a similar law will be introduced in every other of the West-India islands. (See Appendix R.)

The honourable Member for Norwich asked the House

if any thing had been done in consequence of the Addresses presented to the Throne seven years ago, pressing strongly for an improvement in the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies? To this question I will answer in the affirmative; and I will produce official documents in proof of this assertion. It is somewhat extraordinary that the honourable Member for Norwich has never read the Reports which were made by the different Governors, giving an account of the state of the Slaves in the islands over which they preside, in answer to the Addresses in question. In order to put the House, and the honourable gentleman, in possession of facts with which they seem at present to be unacquainted, I will beg the indulgence of the House while I read the Reports on this subject, extracted from "Farther Papers relating to Slaves in the Colonies, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons 19th June, 1818," but not actually delivered to the members till the session of 1819, which gave the following statements from the different islands.

DOMINICA.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Maxwell to Earl Bathurst.)

"The Slaves in this island in general appear to be liberally treated and protected; and I think the Legislature is inclined to adopt any measure for their amelioration that may be recommended by his Majesty's Government, or experience may suggest." (p. 112.)

HONDURAS.

(Extract of a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel Arthur to Lord Bathurst.)

"With regard to the state of the Black population, I have the most heartfelt gratification in assuring your lordship that it is scarcely possible it can be meliorated.

"So great is the kindness, the liberality, the indulgent care of the wood-cutters towards their Negroes, that Slavery would scarcely be known to exist in this country was it not for a few unprincipled adventurers in the town of Belize, who exercise authority over their one or two Slaves in a manner very different from the great body of the community.

"The steps which I have taken with one of those characters, as reported in my dispatch to your lordship of the 21st ult., will, I have no doubt, be attended with the best effect; and I turn with pleasure from this unpleasant exception, to the general features of the picture, which are so truly excellent.

"Amidst all our difficulties in other respects, it is quite impossible, my lord, that any thing can surpass the treatment of the Slaves, men, women, and children, in this country. The system adopted in most other parts of the West Indies, of allotting to each Slave a patch of ground, on which he is to raise food for himself and family, is here quite unknown.

"All the Slaves are most abundantly fed by their proprietors, on the best salted provisions, pork generally, at the rate of five pounds per week for each man, with yams, plantains, rice, salt, flour, and tobacco. Every Slave has a Moschetta pavilion, blanket, and shirt found him; also two suits of Osnaburgh annually. The men and lads work on account of their owners five days in the week; for the Saturday's labour they are entitled, by usage which has become a law, to half a dollar; and the Sunday is entirely their own.

"The women are only employed in domestic purposes, and, if they have young children, no work whatever is required from them by their masters. In fact, my lord, although I came to the West Indies three years ago a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery, I must now confess, that I have in no part of the world seen the labouring class of people possess any thing like the comforts and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras." (pp. 115, 116.)

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, NEVIS, MONTSERRAT, TORTOLA.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Probin.)

"The Slaves in general appear to be contented and happy." (p. 117.)

ST. LUCIA.

(Extract of a Letter from Major-General Douglas.)

"The effects of the Abolition of the Slave Trade are

certainly favourable to the condition of the Black population ; inasmuch as it is now more than ever the interest of every proprietor to preserve the health of his Slaves, and particularly to cherish the rising generation, which was formerly very much neglected, upon the sordid principle that it was cheaper to buy Slaves than to rear them.

“ In general, the treatment of this class of the population is just and kind : but there are many instances of the reverse, according to the disposition of the owner, and some of very great cruelty ; but these, I am happy to say, are not numerous.” (p. 124.)

TOBAGO.

(Extract of a Letter from Mr. President Campbell.)

“ I beg leave to inclose your lordship the Report from the Committee to the Council and Assembly, which was unanimously approved of, upon the present situation of this colony ; and I do most firmly believe the whole to be true. The eleventh clause points out the situation of the Negroes.” (p. 126.)

“ Eleventh clause. Your Committee refers with confidence to the personal knowledge of every member of the two branches of the legislature, and of his honour the president, to bear testimony to the fact of the improvements which within these few years have taken place in the comforts and manners of the Negroes. In confirmation thereof, your Committee refers to the public documents of the colony, to shew how the annual reduction in numbers is now so much less than it used to be, that we may confidently hope, that, instead of an annual reduction, we shall speedily obtain an annual increase. To the diffusion and increase of property among the Negroes (generally evinced in their houses, their grounds, their dress, and their food), the diminished practice of obeah, the infrequency of punishment, and the total relinquishment of all night-work upon the estates, your Committee believe that as much gradual improvement has been made, as the nature of our Black population (a great portion of it yet consisting of imported Africans) admits of.

Other matters of amelioration of the condition of the Negroes are in gradual advancement upon many of the estates, and will become general: but if any thing could more effectually prevent their beneficial attainment, it will be the attempt at direction in these matters of the African Institution, at once disgusting the master, and alarming him for the security of his property; and, by rendering him discontented with his situation, alienating the slave from all sentiments of respect and affection to his master." (p. 130.)

JAMAICA.

(Extract of a Letter from his Grace the Duke of Manchester.)

"I really believe there is a strong desire felt to consult the comfort of the Slaves as much as possible; and if this object does not advance so rapidly as could be wished, it proceeds from no disinclination on the part of the proprietors, but from an apprehension of the consequences of too sudden a change in the habits and manners of the Negroes, and which the events in Barbadoes have a tendency to increase." (p. 270.)

(Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, presented the 10th of December, 1817.

"Your Committee have also considered the effects which have been produced by the measures adopted, during the last session, for the improvement of the condition of the Slave population: the interval which has since elapsed has been too short to admit of any particular effects having resulted from their operation.

"Your Committee, however, are fully persuaded that the tendency of those measures, and the spirit in which they were adopted, have produced a general effect of great importance, both as it respects the condition of the Slaves, and the public tranquillity of the island.

"The Slaves are satisfied that their condition is of sufficient interest to engage the attention of those under whose authority they are placed, and that their comforts and personal security are the objects of protection. In availing themselves of the facility which has been afforded

them in making their complaint of any real or supposed grievance, they have observed the attention with which it has been decided. The increase which has taken place, during the last twelve months, in the number of proceedings, both civil and criminal, which have been instituted by or on behalf of Slaves, is a fact which, accompanied as it has been by the greatest degree of subordination and good order on their part, may be referred to as the most decisive proof of their well-founded confidence in the justice of those to whom they appeal. This feeling, whilst it operates directly on their present condition, by lessening the possibility of their being exposed to injury without receiving redress, and by rendering them contented with their situation, is calculated to impart to them those principles which will enable them to estimate the benefits, to acquire the habits, and to practise the duties which belong to a more civilized state of society.

"Your Committee attach great importance to this consideration, because it encourages the belief, that a foundation is laid for future measures of progressive improvement.

"Every view which your Committee can take of the present and future condition of the Slave population, confirms them in their opinion, that the improvement of their religious, moral, and civil state, can only be effected by gradual and progressive measures; and that any experiments which have a tendency to produce a sudden change in their present state, by the introduction of principles which are unknown to, and inconsistent with, the policy of colonial institutions, and the habits of the Slaves themselves, would be as fatal to them as dangerous to the security of the island." (p. 271.)

TRINIDAD.

(Extract of a Letter from Governor Sir Ralph Woodford.)

"To proprietors of Slaves, as to mankind in general, no incentive can be so great as their own interest. It is not in their power now to replace a Slave, whose physical

powers are exhausted by a short service : therefore the value of a Slave of good character is greatly enhanced beyond the value of his ordinary appraisement ; and proportionate efforts are made to keep up his natural health and vigour.

“ The comforts of the Slaves depend upon themselves and their own industry, and their health upon their own imprudences, or the quantum of work they are required to perform.

“ They can, if they choose, with very little trouble, amass much beyond the wants of the utmost ambition or profligacy ; but the idle and drunken (of which there are many) will always be in poverty and in rags.

“ I have frequently known cases of Negroes preferring to continue Slaves, rather than with ample means to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it. With a humane owner the Negro is most happy ; and as a Slave, and when sick, he always shares the fare of the owner's table.” (pp. 275, 276.)

(See Appendix S.)

In my opinion, nothing can be more satisfactory than these Reports, to shew the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the Slaves. These, let it be remembered, are high authorities ; and I beg to remark, that they are not the statements of West-India proprietors, but of governors, who, as far as their opinions go, must speak disinterestedly : and least of all are they men liable to be influenced by colonial prejudices. But there is another circumstance connected with these Reports, which ought to give them still greater weight with the House ; that several of them come from gentlemen who have been, and still are, extremely zealous in support of the cause of the Abolition of Negro Slavery. For instance ; Governor Maxwell, the Governor of Dominica, after having resided at Sierra Leone, obtained his present appointment through the interest, I believe, of the honourable Member for Bramber. Colonel Arthur, too, who

writes from Honduras, professes that he went out there a perfect Wilberforce as to Slavery. Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor of Trinidad, is a correspondent, and a very valuable one, of the African Institution, and very honourable mention has been made of his name at one of the anniversary meetings of that Society.

Do not these official reports refute the calumnies thrown out by some honourable members; and more particularly the assertion, which I was sorry to read in a pamphlet recently published by the honourable Member for Bramber, "that the system of Slavery in the West Indies is a system of the most unprecedented degradation and unrelenting cruelty?" (See Appendix T.)

The difference between the amendment and the original motion appears to me to be a difference rather in the mode of execution, than in the end we all have in view. As to the preference to be given to the amendment, I think no doubt can be entertained, upon this one plain principle, the conciliation of the White and Black population in the West Indies. If an abstract resolution, declaring "that the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished," was known to emanate from a British House of Commons, it might produce excitement in the minds of the Negroes in our colonies. But if merely an intention to ameliorate the condition of the Black population is held out, the effect will be very different, and no irritation whatever will be excited in their minds. In the one case, any amelioration in their condition will appear to be the work of this House, forced upon their masters in the West Indies, and will excite a spirit of dissatisfaction; but if, on the other hand, as in the resolutions of the right honourable Secretary of State, measures are proposed to, and adopted by, the Colonial Legislatures, it will then appear as if they were the effect of the good-will of the masters towards their Slaves; and instead of discontent and dissatisfaction, gratitude and contentment will be excited in their minds.

For these reasons, I am bound to express my most arty concurrence in the resolutions proposed, by way of amendment, by the right honourable Gentleman on the reasury Bench.

Mr. BROUGHAM.—Sir, I am quite sensible that at this late hour of the night it would be unbecoming in me—it would be acting in contradiction to the general sense of the House—were I either to go into much detail on this important question, or to resist the adoption of the amendment proposed by the right honourable Gentleman opposite. But I confess I cannot leave this question to be finally disposed of, without trespassing for a few minutes upon the patience of the House, that I may guard myself against the snspicion of having made myself a party, to what I fear may ultimately prove to be, a delusion,—a delusion, however, unintentioned, I am persuaded, on the part of the right honourable Gentleman; because, to do him justice, he has been from the beginning a warm advocate of every measure tending to the abolition of the African Slave Trade.

It is upon this ground alone—upon my knowledge of the line of conduct which has hitherto been pursued by the right honourable Gentleman, that I build my confidence that it is not *his* intention, however it may be that of others, to delude the House by getting rid of the motion of my honourable Friend. That motion is set aside as being too abstract; and yet in that of the right honourable Gentleman, which it is proposed to substitute for it, I find nothing specific, nothing practical, pointed out. True it is, the resolutions moved by way of amendment emanate from Ministers, and are to be communicated to the Crown. But this, let it be recollected, is no new course. It has before been pursued, over and over again, with little or no effect. The honourable Member for Seaford (Mr. Ellis in 1797 moved some excellent resolutions (very similar the present), on which he grounded an Address to the Crown for ameliorating the condition of the Slaves in the W

Indies. Again, in 1816, the West Indians, in conjunction with the right honourable Gentleman's predecessor, moved resolutions in the shape of an Address to the Crown—an address in which both Houses of Parliament concurred—calling upon the Prince Regent, in the strongest terms, to recommend to the local authorities in the colonies to carry into effect every measure which might tend to promote the moral and religious improvement, as well as the comfort and happiness, of the Negroes. A more unexceptionable and comprehensive declaration could not well have been made, by the warmest friend to the mitigation and abolition of slavery. But twenty-six long years have now elapsed since the first Address was presented, and seven since the second, and where are the benefits, the visible effects, of these Addresses, to be found? We are, in fact, not one step more advanced in the great work of improvement than we were before. No practical advantages have resulted from these addresses: and yet the last Address in particular, that of 1816, was unanimously voted, and was carried, by the joint recommendation of both Houses of Parliament, to the foot of the Throne. It was also most graciously received, and a most gracious answer was returned, promising to carry the wishes of Parliament into effect.

I am told, however—notwithstanding these facts staring us in the face—I am told that my mistrust of the West-India legislatures is either totally misplaced, or at all events greatly exaggerated; and the honourable Member for Bristol (Mr. Bright), as well as the honourable Member for Sandwich (Mr. Marryat), who went still more at large into the subject, have endeavoured to convince us that we are mistaken, and that the most satisfactory improvements have taken place. I wish I could take the same flattering view of Slavery in the West Indies as the honourable Gentleman. If I could, it would relieve my mind from the load which now oppresses it, believing, as I do, that the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies is revolting to the feelings of human nature. My honourable Friend, the

Member for Bristol, forgetting for an instant those habits, so inherent in professional men, of distrusting the testimony of interested parties—forgetting that professional maxim, ever to be remembered, that “no man is to be trusted as a judge or a witness in his own cause;”—I say, forgetting all this, he makes his appeal to the unbiassed authority of Slave-masters—to the pure, unsuspected, disinterested testimony of the owners of the Slaves themselves! He tells us that the result of his many conversations with them, and of his laborious efforts to obtain information from them, is a conviction that the condition of the Slaves is so greatly improved, that they are now perfectly contented, and happy! The honourable Member for Sandwich then, in *his* turn, informs us that gentlemen, who have gone out with opinions hostile to slavery, have been so converted by a view of the comforts and delights of that state, nay, even as it exists in Honduras, perhaps the most detestable spot on the face of the globe, a swamp, where the forests are still uncleared—a place, in comparison of which, such places as Jamaica and Barbadoes might without exaggeration be termed a perfect Paradise;—yet these gentlemen, who went out thus biased in their opinions, the honourable Member tells us, were so converted by what they saw, as to come to the conclusion that the Negroes endured no misery whatever, and that all we had heard of the wretched condition of West-India Slaves were mere idle tales!

But there is one part of the speech of the honourable Member for Bristol, to which I must for a moment address myself, and for which I must claim the indulgence of the House. I am told that I must not trust the book called “*Negro Slavery*,” a work which certainly contains damning proof of the state of Negro Slavery in the West Indies. (*Hear*, from the honourable Member for Bristol.) The honourable Member seems by his cheer to adhere to his former charge against that work; a charge which, I must confess, I cannot but feel as one of a grave character made against one of my oldest and most valued friends.—[Mr. Brougham here entered at some length

into a vindication of the character and accuracy of the author, and then proceeded.]—And what is the charge made against him? It is one of a specific nature, and I will admit that general character is nothing against a specific charge. The charge then is, that the author of this pamphlet has garbled and misquoted Mr. Cooper. So says my honourable Friend. But I will go a step beyond my honourable and learned Friend, for a correct view of this point. I will go to the author of the statement; to Mr. Cooper himself; and the House will judge whether it is probable that Mr. Cooper's statement has been changed, garbled, or misquoted, when I tell them that Mr. Cooper himself corrected the sheets for the press, and that every syllable of the pamphlet which concerned him passed through his hands before publication, and received his express approbation. After this statement, will it not be wasting the time of the House to say one word more upon the subject?

But another evidence in favour of the author is the still more valuable testimony of his accuser, my honourable and learned Friend himself. The honourable Member has read two passages to the House, and has observed upon the difference to be found between them; but, after paying the most studious attention to the two passages so read, I confess I could not discover the slightest difference between the one statement and the other.

Then, to return to the honourable Member for Sandwich: he has made a most triumphant appeal to the House with respect to the condition of the Slaves in Dominica, and he has read the Report of the Governor of that Island, wherein the Slaves are represented to be most happy, and contented. Are things really so? Are the Slaves in Dominica too, as happy as the honourable Member would represent them to be in Honduras? The Governor of Dominica says, indeed, that the Slaves in general appear to be liberally treated and protected; but I am curious to know how soon after his arrival in Dominica this letter from Governor Maxwell was written; and whether it was before or after his having been presented by the grand inquest of

the island as a nuisance, for interfering to protect the Slaves from cruelty. If written afterwards, it would only shew how forgiving a character, what a good-natured creature, the Governor must be. It must, however, have been written before. And why, let me ask, was he presented by the grand jury of the island as a nuisance? Was it because he impeached the rights of the owner to the services of the slave? Or was it for *illegally* interfering between master and slave? No, nothing of this kind. It was only for wishing to put in force the laws of the Island in favour of some unhappy Negroes who had been most barbarously ill-treated by their masters. For this it was that the grand jury found a presentment against the Governor for a nuisance. In proportion to the weight of such a fact as this, uncontradicted, to deny which not even an attempt has been made, down goes my confidence in the local authorities of the West Indies; all my hopes resting upon the exertions of these authorities vanish into air. For what confidence can possibly be placed in the efforts or endeavours of those who have presented their Governor as a nuisance, because he had made an attempt to put the laws in force against masters for their inhuman barbarity towards some poor helpless Negroes? Down then, I say, goes all my confidence; down go all my hopes, my fond expectations, of the exertions, not only of these particular authorities, but of the legislative bodies in general, whose conduct has, on many occasions, been not a whit less strange.

In Jamaica too, I am told, all is perfect; and that the Negro, who must be allowed to be the best judge of his own happiness, is perfectly contented with his lot—so well contented that he would not change it. But, unfortunately for this assertion, it appears, from consulting a single page of the Jamaica Gazettes, that it cannot be supported. It is curious enough to observe the broad and most unequivocal contradiction given by these Gazettes to this grave statement of the Jamaica Assembly—for it thence appears that many of the Negroes have shewn a most pointed

desire to change their happy situation. In a single page of these Gazettes there are no less than fifty "Run-aways"—persons quitting this enviable situation, not only with a certainty of many privations, but at the risk of all the severe penalties which attach to their crime. But let us look to one of the advertisements: "For sale: 140 head of horned cattle"—I beg pardon of the House; that is not the paragraph I allude to. It is the next column which contains the long list of "Run-aways."—"Cecilia, a young Creole Negro woman"—— It has been said that young women are never known to be punished in these realms of Negro bliss, where they are so much better off than in their own country, that they ought to bless their stars that they have been taken from it. Such is the kind of language to which our ears have been accustomed on the subject of Negro slavery, from the beginning of this controversy to the present day; but it proves a great deal too much, and consequently proves nothing. But facts must always bear down such arguments; and the very papers I have in my hand, while they describe the persons of the fugitives, distinguishing them by their various marks and brands—the badges of the sufferings and the degradations to which these unhappy beings have been exposed—speak volumes on the subject. But to proceed: "Cecilia, a young Creole woman, five feet high, marked (branded!) S. M. and W. S. on top, on right shoulder, belonging to the estate of John Stevens." Then here is another, who "says he is free, but has no documents to prove his freedom." Then come several others, described by various maims, and marks on different parts of their bodies. Many have "lost several of their front teeth;" others are described as being marked with letters in a diamond on the shoulders and breasts, and having sores on the arms or legs, and scars on their face or shoulders, with marks of flogging on their backs. And so they go through all the sores, and marks, and brands, and scars, and traces of the cart-whip, which distinguish these happy individuals, who, though we are told they are

so contented, are yet, somehow or other, so insensible to their own bliss, that they will run away from their kind-hearted, humane masters, by whom we have been told, too, that the whip is now in nearly total disuse !

I cannot but express my great astonishment that the right honourable Gentleman should have compared the Negro Slaves in the West Indies with the Roman domestic slaves, and with other slaves of antiquity. And I am the more surprised, when I reflect on the classical taste and profound classical knowledge for which the right honourable Gentleman is so remarkable. There are certainly some points in which the condition of the West-India Slaves resemble those of antiquity ; but, speaking generally, the two states do not admit of a comparison. Will any man say, that in a country where the land was tilled by freemen, as among the ancients, it was possible the same habitual cruelty and severity of exaction could prevail, as in those colonies, where men are compelled by the whip, by mere brute force, to cultivate the soil, and where habitual dread of the lash stands engraven on the very front of the system as the sole motive to exertion ? Not that I mean to assert that the whip is always used, any more than the whip of a waggoner is always in use ; but what I assert is, that the Slaves on plantations are worked by placing the men and the women, of various degrees of strength and capacity, in a line, in which they are compelled to toil by the imminent fear of the lash being applied to their backs ; and it is applied, as often as their laxity of exertion may seem to render it necessary. Such a system, I say, converts a man into a brute animal. All the noble feelings and energies of our nature, and almost all traces of humanity, are eradicated by this base practice, by which the man is made to work, and act, and move at the will of another, and is thus of necessity reduced to the level of a brute : it is a practice which makes its appeal, not to the qualities which distinguish him from the beasts of the field, but to those which he shares in common with them.

It is said that efforts have been made to ameliorate the condition of the Slave, by giving him religious instruction ; and that since this question was last discussed in this House, those efforts have been increased. If this be so, it shews at least the benefit of such discussions, since it is now admitted even by those who then so loudly cried out against them. We were then run down by clamour : we were accused of doing that which would raise a revolt through the whole of the West-Indian Archipelago ; and we were loudly and vehemently charged with aiming a deadly blow at the interests both of the Black and the White population in the West Indies. There was, it was said, no occasion whatever for our interference ; the Negroes had kind masters, tender drivers, a zealous clergy, amiable governors, and wise legislators, to superintend, controul, and co-operate in works of humanity. But, notwithstanding all we then heard of this machinery of mercy, by our interference with which we might do mischief and could possibly do no good, it now appears that the effect of our discussions has been, that religious instruction has been much more widely spread, and that it is still spreading, through the Colonies. I am happy indeed to find the prediction of evil so completely falsified.

I observe that there is on the table a paper, and that not the least important on this interesting subject, which has not been referred to by the honourable Member for Sandwich. I allude to the Letter of a worthy Curate, which enters into some details with respect to the religious instruction of the Slaves. This worthy person states, with great simplicity, that he had been between twenty and thirty years among the Negroes, and that no single instance of conversion to Christianity had taken place during that time—all his efforts to gain new proselytes among the Negroes had been in vain. All of a sudden, however, light had broken in upon their darkness so rapidly, that between 5000 and 6000 Negroes had been baptized in a few days ! I confess I was at first much surprised at this statement ; I knew not how to comprehend it ; but all of a sudden light

broke in upon my darkness also. I found that there was a clue to this most surprising story; and that these wonderful conversions were brought about, not by a miracle, as the good man seems himself to have really imagined and would almost make us believe, but by a premium of a dollar a head paid to this worthy curate for each Slave whom he baptized! I understood, too, that the whole amount of the previous religious instruction which each Negro received, was neither more nor less than attending, on one occasion, at the church where the curate presided. Such was the mode of propagating religion which seems to have afforded so much satisfaction, and to have given so much cause for triumph. If any person thought that any real practical good could result from such an administration of religious instruction and of Christian baptism, let him enjoy his hopes: I cannot agree with him.

What then has been done, let me ask, since the Abolition of the Slave Trade, to improve the condition of the Slave? I think I now hear my lamented friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, ask that question, as he once did with so much effect. I never shall forget the impression he produced upon those who, like myself, for ten long years had been indulging in a fond, but vain hope, that the abolition of the Slave Trade was all that was wanted for bettering the condition of the Slaves. We have now unhappily survived him between four and five years, and with how much more force might we now put the same question? It was indeed long our hope, that, if we did but abolish the Slave Trade, through the gradual progress of improvement, Slavery itself would soon be extinguished. I myself gave into the delusion. I said, with others, Leave measures of internal regulation to the Colonial Legislatures: only abolish the Slave Trade: it will then be the interest of the master to treat his slaves well, and under the influence of that feeling the condition of the slave must rapidly improve.

How bitterly have we been disappointed in these fond expectations! I beg, however, not to be understood as

casting any particular blame on the owners of estates for this failure, for they have perhaps little in their power. We ought to be aware that the state of landed property in the West Indies is not in the least analogous to the state of landed property in England, although it has often been erroneously compared to it. The owners of West-Indian estates usually reside in this country, and can have but a feeble controul over the course of proceedings in the colonies. And though some of them, it is true, may have got their estates by inheritance, yet this is not the case with a great majority: they have obtained them by purchases on speculation; or by debt, having advanced money on mortgage and with a view to consignments. In short, landed property in the West Indies partakes much more of the nature of a hazardous commercial speculation, than of that stable enjoyment of territorial property which characterizes the British landholder. Men in these circumstances, it is obvious, have no permanent interest in the soil. Their object is to make the most they can in the shortest time; and therefore they will not be deterred, by considerations of humanity for the Slaves, from extracting, during their temporary possession, by means of the uncontrouled power they possess over those wretched beings, the utmost benefit which the estate is capable of yielding.

But even if the owners acted with the best intentions—and many of them I believe do—they are absent, and know nothing of what is actually going on on their estates. It is an individual who has no real interest in the estate, who is placed as their agent on the spot to superintend the whole concern. Some owners of estates may be very honest, honourable, humane men, who would not work their slaves too much; but what security have we that this will be the case with all, or that many may not even think it their interest to act otherwise? Indeed, I am persuaded that it is not so plainly the pecuniary interest of the slave-owner in all cases to be humane, as some have imagined. The West-India purchaser of an estate may consider himself engaged in a gambling concern, and may

hope in a few years to scourge a handsome profit out of the unhappy beings committed to his charge; and he may even flatter himself that he will clear a greater profit in this way than he would have done had he pursued a different course. His object is to get a great return in a short time; and although in a long series of years it might be against his interest to over-work his Slaves, yet, his object being a rapid return for his capital, he cannot wait the slow progress of improvement in order to attain it. It is very well known, and the simile is far from being a new one, that some post-masters use their horses exactly upon this principle. They might keep their horses longer alive, by making them do less work and by giving them better treatment; but they prefer making them do more work, though it may wear them down sooner, upon a mere calculation of profit and loss. Far be it from me to charge such a sordid calculation as this upon the West-India planters; but what I say is, that the identity of their interests and those of humanity ought not to be so much relied upon: you cannot trust to the former alone in the treatment of the Slave, because I have shewn that views of interest may be supposed to require treatment, in certain circumstances, wholly different from that which would be dictated by the principles of humanity.

Such being my view of the situation in which master and slave stand to each other, I confess I look with the greatest distrust, with the slenderest possible hope, to any real and solid advantage to be derived from the resolutions moved by the right honourable Gentleman, and which refer the matter to the Colonial Assemblies. Let the House remember, that we have done the same thing twice before; the effect produced by it has been very small indeed; and I greatly fear that we shall only meet with further disappointment if we again resort to the same expedient. Those Legislatures may pretend to meet fully the wishes of Parliament, and yet may do nothing effectual; and, after five years more have elapsed without any progress having been made, we shall be again called

upon, either by events which have happened in the West Indies, or by our own consciences at home, to look into the question in good earnest, when it will brook no further delays; and then we shall have the painful reflection, that if we had acted boldly in the first instance, five years of misery would have been saved to these unhappy beings.

How comes it to pass, I would ask, that no steps have yet been taken towards the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves? For how many years has it, for example, been proposed to attach the Slave to the soil? The question, I know, has been discussed; but why has no progress been made in consequence of that discussion? It has been said that there are many difficulties to encounter. Doubtless there are. It would be hard upon the Slave, it is argued, to be kept upon a barren soil, an exhausted plantation; but it seems to have been forgotten, that the very exhaustion of the soil, unfitting it for sugar culture, is in the Negro's favour. But how comes it, that in the West Indies the richest soils in the world thus undergo exhaustion, while in other countries the poorest soils are subject to no such process, and do not, under ordinary cultivation, deteriorate, but improve? Is it not that a just curse seems, in the dispensation of Providence, to attend the cruel and blood-thirsty method of culture by Slaves? else why would not culture keep the land in the West Indies in the same heart in which the land in the East Indies or in Europe is kept?

But are we to say that the Slaves shall not be attached to the soil, merely because some possible inconveniences may, in supposable cases, be pointed out as the result? Certainly not. If the argument urged on the score of the poverty of the soil in certain situations were valid, the same might have been said of England, when *villénage in gross* was converted into *villénage regardant*; and copyholders would then have had no existence: there would have been no such thing as a freeman in the land, because, forsooth, a gust of wind might have blown a part of Norfolk into the sea, and then it might have been said,

how can subsistence be drawn from the sands of Norfolk : we must retain the power of transferring the villein to richer lands elsewhere. If this sort of argument had been allowed to weigh in former times, we should have been all of us at the present moment *villeins in gross*. I have never heard it said that there is one single plantation in the West Indies so barren that provisions will not grow upon it sufficient for the maintenance of the slaves belonging to it. But I would make a broader and more general answer to the objection, and I would say, that we are bound to act upon the mass of cases, and that one exception is no argument against the general principle.

I cannot close these observations, which I have deemed it incumbent upon me to make to the House, without stating my decided opinion that we ought not to resist the amendment of the right honourable Secretary ; because it is at least a step in advance towards emancipation, although I confess I entertain but few hopes of its leading to any sound practical result. It may, however, be ultimately a ground for a stronger expression of the opinion of the House ; and I sincerely trust my honourable Friend will in no long time propose to the House some more specific resolution, with respect to the freedom of children born after a certain period. Holding that liberty to the Slaves in the West Indies must come sooner or later ; and being convinced, that, if they are not now ripe for actual emancipation, at least we are arrived at the time when it will be safe to legislate with a view to that consummation ; it seems to me to be now the imperative duty of the legislature to pass some act with respect to the freedom of unborn children. We shall be wanting in our duty to that part of our fellow-subjects, if we do not immediately announce our intention of taking up that part of the subject. Difficulties doubtless will be to be encountered—difficulties there are in every change—but are they insurmountable ? I trust that no man will be stopped by them, who does not wish to be impeded.

Sir, we hear of the risk of insurrection ; we have heard of

it in every stage of the discussion : from the first moment this question was brought under the consideration of the House, to the present instant, the cry has never been out of the mouths of those who oppose all change. But yet our discussions, although declared to be so injurious in theory, have never produced the slightest practical injury. Even the insurrection in Barbadoes, it might easily be shewn, had no connection, as was alleged, with the discussions on the Registry Bill, but sprung from causes perfectly distinct. This is a sufficient answer to all such chimerical apprehensions. Parliament has certainly not shewn any desire to interfere between master and slave ; but if steps are not taken by the master to convert his present tenure into one of a more restricted nature, Parliament is bound to interfere, by the right which it holds of legislating for all his Majesty's subjects. This right, sacred and unalienable, is inherent in the British legislature, and has never been abandoned, excepting as it regards taxation.

Sir, I beg pardon of the House for having troubled it by going at greater length into the subject than I at first intended, but I thought there was a chance of some mistake arising as to the grounds on which we accede to the resolutions now proposed by the right honourable Gentleman ; and I wish more particularly to guard against being understood as expressing any great hopes of benefit from the present measure, which is little more than a repetition of the former Addresses of Parliament to the Crown, and the former references of the Crown to the Colonial Assemblies, followed by an entire disappointment of every expectation that had been indulged. With these recollections deeply impressed upon my mind, let it not be supposed that I can indulge a sanguine hope of any beneficial practical results from these resolutions.

Mr. BERNAL was surprised that his honourable and learned Friend (Mr. Brougham), who must acknowledge that conciliation was the tone most fitting to be adopted, should

yet have thought proper to select the topics which he had done. He might have selected topics much happier. The laws did not leave the Negro so destitute of protection as was supposed. Appeals were allowed to the Negroes under those laws, pending which they were to hold their liberty. They might also bring actions of trespass; and the Attorney-General and the law authorities of Jamaica returned very many cases, in which those actions had been successfully maintained. He complained especially of the argument of his honourable and learned Friend, as to the failure of the owners in not having attached the slaves to the soil, and the comparison made by him between the culture of England and that of the sugar plantations. What resemblance could be fairly assumed between the *adscripti glebæ* and the West-Indian Negroes? The particular mode of cultivation in the colonies had been induced and continued under the sanction of the Legislature; and if the Legislature now were to insist upon a change in that mode, they were bound to compensate the persons whose property and interests were to be so materially affected. (See Appendix U.)

Mr. ALEXANDER BARING.—Having been alluded to by my honourable Friend who opened the debate, I cannot avoid stating to the House how strongly I feel the necessity of something being done, and something considerable, on the present question. I feel that it is one of the greatest possible importance and delicacy; but I fear that honourable gentlemen around me, whose feelings I respect, have been led away by the ardour and fervency of those feelings to exaggerate the real facts, and to under-rate the many difficulties and dangers which must accompany any alteration in the present system. I am anxious to state my own ideas as to the extent of these difficulties; and undoubtedly, if there really exist such a state of things, a case of that extreme atrocity which has been represented to the public, every possible risk ought to be encountered to get the better of the system which

produced them. I confess it does not surprise me, that those who believe in the existence of these barbarities should wish that no time should be lost in remedying such an evil. My own opinion, however, is, that, as far as the physical sufferings of the Negro go, they have been much over-stated ; and I may even cite my own observations on the subject to prove the fact. I am not myself a West-India proprietor, but I have seen cultivation carried on by Slaves in some of the American States, in Georgia and Carolina ; and I must say, that, from all I saw there, and from every information I have received from our own colonies, I do not believe, on looking about the world and considering the general lot of mankind, that, if I was called upon to say what part of the globe most particularly excited my sympathy and commiseration, I do not believe that I should fix upon the Negroes of the West Indies, as far as regards their food and clothing, and the whole of their treatment. (See Appendix V.)

I must say, that when my honourable and learned Friend (Mr. Brougham), in a speech of much energy and eloquence, sets aside the testimony of all those colonial governors (which was detailed to the House by the honourable Member for Sandwich), and takes up the opinions, published in the form of pamphlets, of honest but enthusiastic men, who are much more likely to be misled as to facts than those public functionaries in their official reports, I confess I cannot fully approve of such a mode of arguing the question. I should say, in opposition to these feelings, and to those of my honourable friend the Member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce), that unless he himself had been in the colonies, and had been an eye-witness to the scenes he has described, I would rather take the reports of those governors, men of education, having no interest in the Colonies, than the opinions of these individuals, who are not very likely to be sparing in their descriptions of the cruelties and atrocities committed in the West Indies, well knowing that such glowing and exaggerated accounts,

here solitary instances of oppression, instead of being the exception, are converted into the rule, would not be unacceptable to those to whom they communicated their statements. My own opinion is, that the condition of the Slaves is undoubtedly, in many respects, superior to that of most of the European peasantry. They are well clothed, well fed, and, I believe, generally treated with justice and kindness.

But the circumstance which weighs the heaviest on my mind, is the moral condition of the Slaves, and the almost impossibility of their deriving, in their present situation, any religious or moral instruction from those who are placed over them, and who cannot boast of the best morals themselves. There is something altogether so painful in their situation, in this respect, that I am induced to wish that something could be done to ameliorate their moral condition; nor can I see any danger which could possibly arise from a prudent plan of religious instruction, by which they might be raised in the scale of being. (See Appendix W.)

As to the objection taken by my honourable and learned Friend to the statement with reference to the insurrection at Barbadoes; I believe it to have been correctly stated that the insurrection was owing to the report spread in the colony of what was doing at home, and to the consequences which the Negroes anticipated from it. It was, I think, the statement of the Governor, Sir James Leith, that the insurrection was owing entirely to that circumstance. Indeed, it is impossible to consider the state in which men in that country exist, without supposing an extreme liability to excitement among them. The same excitement might, and probably would, be produced at home by similar means. Supposing a question were argued in the House of Commons on the subject of a division of the property of the rich among the poorer people of this country; and there were among us men enthusiastic enough to maintain the justice of this division, and to argue!

impious it was that one portion of the population should live upon coarse food, and drink nothing but water, while another portion should feast on venison and champagne, and indulge in all the luxuries and delicacies of life;—supposing, I say, these opinions were to spread (and I really think a great deal of good argument might be stated in their favour upon the score of Christianity), and discussions on some future occasion were to arise in this House; I would ask, whether they could possibly take place without producing considerable irritation even in this country, accustomed as we are to free discussion? We do not want, therefore, these governors of the West Indies to tell us what dangers would result from such a course of proceeding. It is quite sufficient for us to know human nature, to be sensible that the danger is extreme, and that the discussion, therefore, must be entered upon with the greatest possible caution. (See Appendix X.)

The honourable Gentleman who opened this discussion has given us some instances where Slavery has been entirely got rid of without the slightest danger resulting from the application of the necessary remedies for curing the evil; and the states of Pennsylvania, of New York, and of New Jersey, have been quoted for this purpose. The honourable Gentleman seemed as if he could not express himself in terms of sufficient delight and rapture: it was beautiful to observe, he said, how gradually the whole mass of Slavery sunk, and, as it were, melted away, without disorder, or the slightest interference on the part of the legislature being required to prevent the dangers which might have been anticipated. But he has cited these cases to the House without possessing a sufficient knowledge of the real facts. In New York there were 1,000,000 Whites, and the whole Black population did not amount to more than 5000. Is this, then, an analogous case? The same is the case precisely with the State of New Jersey: there the whole amount of the Black population was not more than 10,000. In Penn-

sylvania the number was still less. That judicious people, the Quakers, resident in Pennsylvania, began very early to abolish the system of slavery, and the amount of them was comparatively nothing. These are, therefore, all the cases which have been mentioned by the honourable Gentleman with respect to North America. Not one of them is in point, to prove that no danger exists from the proposed alterations.

I should say, that with respect to the other case, of Columbia, although it is undoubtedly more in point, yet that it is still not to be compared with our Colonies in the West Indies. In the case of Columbia, there was, I think, a population of 3,000,000, out of which 800,000 were Blacks; so that the Whites at least were more than enough to keep the Negroes in awe of them. The case stated of the Island of Ceylon is not in the least analogous to the present, because that is a case where the inhabitants of the country itself were in a state of vassalage and personal servitude, and where they were released from their bonds by measures instituted by a strong military government on the spot. Are then, I would ask, any of these cases to be compared with a colony in the West Indies, where there is no mass of property represented by persons on the spot, where there is no physical superiority to counteract the effect of any insurrection which may arise in the colony, the Slaves outnumbering the Whites by at least ten to one? (See Appendix Y.)

With respect to the different remedies suggested by the honourable Gentleman who commenced this debate; so far as they have been acceded to by the right honourable Gentleman, they very much meet my own view of the subject; but certainly the question of the actual emancipation of the slaves is one which appears to me to be attended with the greatest difficulties. The suggestion of my honourable Friend is, that children born after a certain period should be free. At first sight, I confess it to be a very natural proposition, and one most accordant to our feelings; but it seems to

have been forgotten, that there is this question yet to be answered, and as it appears to me it will be difficult to meet it with a satisfactory reply ; it is this, If these children are born free, who is to take care of them ? It has been said that they may be apprenticed for a certain number of years ; but this, I think, will be impracticable, for it will not be worth the while of the planter to bring up these children—we will say from the age of twelve to nineteen—well knowing that at the end of that period they will be at liberty to leave him and go whither they please. I have very strangely miscalculated, if such a scheme can be carried into execution : it is in fact wholly impracticable. It is admitted, I think, on all hands, that one of the greatest advantages of the abolition of the Slave Trade is, that it tends to an improvement both in the condition and in the treatment of the Negro females and children ; that it gives an interest to the master in rearing the children, and in taking proper care of the mother while she is breeding. But if you do away with the interest of the proprietor in the offspring, as undoubtedly would be the effect of the proposition of my honourable Friend, all this beneficial result of the abolition of the Slave Trade immediately ceases. It is a fact too evident to be for a moment disputed, that, if this plan is adopted, the proprietor has at least not the same reason as before, for taking care either of the mother or of the offspring. (See Appendix Z.)

I am satisfied, however, that the matter is in the best possible hands to which it could be entrusted ; and I will only say, that if any measures are taken for abolishing Slavery, either directly or circuitously, they must have the effect of endangering the peace and tranquillity of our Colonies. And if we were to arrive at a free Black population, the inevitable consequence will be, that the whole of the islands will be gone from this country ; there will be an end to our colonial system. It would be absurd to suppose that a free Black population, so enlightened and cultivated as to value their rights and duly to appreciate

their strength; that a population so instructed and so civilized, will consent to continue devoting their labours to proprietors the greater portion of whom are resident in England. It is impossible for a moment to suppose such a state of things to exist; or that this country can possibly retain any interest whatever in colonies of this description. The instant such a state of society as I have described is established, we must, I say, bid adieu to our colonial system. The colonies would be of no farther value to Great Britain. (See Appendix AA.)

With regard to the question of compensation, I think that my honourable friend, the Member for Bramber, has not acted with his usual candour and liberality, in not having mentioned one word of compensation to those persons who are so deeply interested in this question. It is quite evident, that, in whatever way you proceed, you must vitally affect pecuniary interests. For instance; if you say that children shall be free after a certain period, you convert permanent property into a life estate, you totally alter the nature of that property. When it is considered with what extreme delicacy we touch property in this country, it never can be tolerated for an instant that a measure so vitally affecting the interests of the West-India proprietors should be unaccompanied by compensation, which would be the greatest possible injustice. When I recollect too—and let it not be forgotten by the House—the strong and able argument raised by my honourable friend, the Member for Weymouth, who introduced this question to the consideration of the House, on the subject of the brewers, to prove to us, that if the measure then before the House (a measure which I, for one, deemed a most important and salutary one) should pass into a law, the vested interests (as my honourable Friend termed them) of the brewers would be destroyed, and their property greatly injured—all these interests and this property would be sacrificed, if the beer trade were to be thrown open to the public. Now I cannot forbear contrasting these former

sentiments of my honourable Friend with his present proceedings in this House. I should be sorry to take an unfair advantage of any argument used by my honourable Friend, but I must say, conscientiously, that if there were a measure which I thought more than another could contribute to the health and secure the comfort of the poorer classes, it would be that which my honourable Friend so strongly, and with so much ingenuity, opposed, on no other ground than that one class of men would be probably injured, and deprived of a monopoly which I feel satisfied the law never intended to be allowed to them. But, of all the cases which have come under the consideration of the House, I think none could call more loudly for compensation, upon every principle of justice, than the one now under discussion. Those who have their interests so intimately involved in this question, have a right to call upon Parliament to consider their claim before any material alteration is attempted. I only hope that the subject, so properly left to the care of Government, will be treated with the delicacy it deserves.

I must observe, before I sit down, that I trust his Majesty's Ministers will not be unduly influenced by the petitions on the table, which have, in fact, been got up by a few persons in the metropolis. I know no question upon which petitions have been procured with more trick and management, than on the present; or where they have come so notoriously from persons having no means whatever of exercising a judgment upon the question. It is, in fact, considered one more of conscience than of judgment; and persons, according to the fashion of the day, think to quiet their consciences for the year, either by subscribing their money to one of the Missionary Societies, or their names to one of these petitions against Negro Slavery in the West Indies. I am, however, happy to see that such a feeling prevails in this country, and that there are people who are capable of being so actuated by such considerations; it is highly honourable

to the national character; but I hope it will not have the effect of setting the machinery of government at work injuriously to the interests either of the public or of individuals. It is the same feeling which put the politics of Europe into an unusual state of ferment, and set the Congresses of Vienna and Verona at work; and which every year brings upon the table of the House whole loads of humbug about the Slave Trade. It seems to me as if these negotiations were kept up merely to gratify the feelings of this country; to shew to the people of England how much the great potentates of Europe have the abolition of the Slave Trade at their hearts. Austria and Russia, who have, God knows, slaves enough in their own territories to practise emancipation upon, are repeating every year their assurances to the good people of England of their anxiety for the abolition of Negro Slavery; and, somehow or other, our Minister, who attends at these meetings of the European monarchs, is fortunate enough to bring home with him great masses of papers, to prove that these most humane and kind-hearted Emperors take a most lively interest in the question. (See Appendix BB.)

Undoubtedly I do most sincerely wish well to the efforts of his Majesty's Government on the present occasion; and I feel great satisfaction that the task has been undertaken by them; and, from the speech of the right honourable Gentleman, I feel great confidence that the resolutions proposed by him will be acted upon, not only sincerely, but with that judgment and discretion, with that caution and justice and delicacy, which such great and important interests deserve.

LORD ALTHORP.—I am anxious to address one or two observations to the House upon this important question. I certainly think that the Planters of the West Indies have a fair claim upon this House for compensation in the event of the adoption of the plans proposed by a

honourable Friend (Mr. F. Buxton.) With reference to what has fallen from my honourable Friend who spoke last, relative to the cultivation of the Colonies by free labour, I differ from him, certainly, in supposing that the conversion of the slaves into freemen would be such an immense loss to this country. I, however, look at this subject with a view chiefly to the interests of the Negroes. My honourable Friend has ridiculed the petitions which have been presented in such a mass for the abolition of Slavery in the West Indies. Undoubtedly there have been a great number of petitions presented; the feeling of the country seems to be pretty nearly unanimous upon the subject; and I would ask my honourable Friend, if he really thinks that the Slave Trade itself would have been abolished, if it had not been for the same general expression of the sentiments of the people of this country. It cannot be for a moment disputed, that it was the general feeling of the nation, the general abhorrence of the inhumanity and barbarity of the practice of dealing in human flesh, which produced its abolition.

I wish, however, the emancipation of the Slaves to proceed very gradually, because I feel apprehensive, that, if the greatest caution is not used in the application of the remedies, evils of an alarming nature may be the result. With respect, therefore, to the discretion to be exercised by this Government in the steps to be taken, I entirely agree with my honourable Friend. But, on the other hand, when I reflect on the moral degradation to which these unhappy beings are reduced; and when I consider how inconsistent it is with their comfort and their happiness, and how contrary to every principle of justice and humanity it is, that they should be suffered to remain in that state, when this Government has it in its power to ameliorate their condition; I would say, that the sooner emancipation can be brought about, the more satisfaction shall I feel at its accomplishment.

It has been stated several times to-night, that the con-

dition of the Negro in the West Indies is in many respects preferable to that of our labourers in this country; and my honourable Friend, who spoke last, asserted that the physical sufferings of the Negro have been greatly over-rated. The honourable Member for Sandwich, too, has stated broadly, and has quoted various documents to prove it, that the slave is perfectly contented and happy. If we look only to the clothing and food allowed to these unfortunate beings, it is enough to convince any reasonable man, without further investigation, of the necessity of an alteration in the present system; and it is idle to the last degree to talk of the happiness and comfort enjoyed by them. But it is said, that some of these happy Slaves are so conscious of their bliss, that they have even refused to take advantage of an offer of their liberty, and have preferred to live and die in Slavery. If the object were to prove the low state to which, as moral creatures, these beings have been reduced, nothing could be stronger than this single statement. Good God! can it be imagined for a moment, that a man, possessing the least particle of the sympathies and affections of his species, should prefer to doom himself without remorse to Slavery for life; that he should doom his children after him, from generation to generation, to be born to live and die in the bonds of Slavery; that he should doom for ever his sons to the lash of the slave-driver, and expose his daughters to the will and power of a cruel task-master, who might at pleasure subject them to his wanton lust? If any thing, I say, can raise feelings of indignation and horror in the breast, it would be the knowledge of such a fact as this. But what must be the feelings of a free-born Englishman, enjoying the glorious blessings of freedom, on bearing such a statement as this? The coldest heart could not but be keenly affected by it; and even those who are most interested in the question must sympathize with the general feeling of the country.

I will not trouble the House by going further into this

question, but I must express my gratitude to my honourable Friend for bringing this subject under the consideration of the House. If nothing more has been done, at least it has had the effect of producing the resolutions of my right honourable Friend opposite, which, I hope, may be considered as one step towards the total emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies.

Mr. BUXTON (in reply.)—I had made up my mind not to trouble the House with a single observation in reply. I had already trespassed long on your attention ; and I was abundantly contented to rest the defence of the statements with which I opened the business, on the powerful speeches of my honourable Friends. In this determination I should have persevered, had it not been for the speech of the honourable Gentleman who spoke last but one (Mr. Baring.) That Gentleman has charged me with inconsistency—he has accused me of using one sort of language on this question, and another upon subjects where my own interests are concerned. He tells us that I was sufficiently mindful of the rights of private property, when that property was my own ; but that I never even whispered a syllable about compensation to the West-India Planter. Now I appeal to the House, whether there is justice in the charge. I ask those who listened to my statements, whether I did not clearly and explicitly declare my opinion that the question of compensation to the Planter was one that merited attention. I appeal to the honourable Gentleman himself, whether the language I used was not to this effect :—Slavery is an injustice, but it is an injustice sanctioned by our law : the crime is ours, and ours must be the expense of getting rid of it. The honourable Gentleman is, then, in error, when he says I never alluded to compensation. But what if I had not ? Is there no difference between a vested interest in a house or a tenement, and a vested interest in a human being ?

No difference between a right to bricks and mortar, and a right to the flesh of man—a right to torture his body and to degrade his mind at your good will and pleasure? There is this difference,—the right to the house originates in law, and is reconcilable to justice; the claim (for I will not call it a right) to the man, originated in robbery, and is an outrage upon every principle of justice and every tenet of religion.

The right honourable Gentleman (Mr Canning) complains of my language in having referred to the Slave Trade. "Why," he asks, "do you recall the horrors of that odious and abolished practice?" For this plain reason, that your title to a slave is founded on that practice. By the Slave Trade you obtained him. Upon that practice, now reprobated, and now by us abolished, your claim is founded. Every reproach uttered against Slave Trading impeaches your title to the Slave. You say the man is your property. I ask in reply, how did you obtain that property? And you are driven to the necessity of acknowledging that it was gained by the blackest of crimes—by that act which you now punish as a felony; by that act which the British Parliament stigmatized as "contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy;" by that act which even the assembled Monarchs of Europe (not suspected of too ardent a love of liberty) describe as "desolating Africa, degrading Europe, and afflicting humanity," and as "repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality."

There is one point in the speech of the honourable Member for Sandwich, upon which, as I have risen, I must make a few observations—because it is really the most matchless exemplification of forgetfulness, the most memorable instance I ever met with of a treacherous memory. The honourable Gentleman quoted to us, from the papers during the last twenty years printed by this House, every sentence and expression which could be construed into a defence of slavery, or an approval of the condition of

slaves. One could hardly sufficiently admire the degree of industry which prompted him to search out, or the force of memory which enabled him to repeat, every passage in this voluminous correspondence which favours his view of the subject. Amongst other papers, he refers to the correspondence of Colonel Arthur. In 1816 Colonel Arthur declares that he came to the West Indies, three years preceding, a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery; but that experience had changed his views, and that he could hardly find terms to express his admiration of the comforts and advantages of the slave population of Honduras. The honourable Gentleman triumphantly appeals to these expressions. But in that same volume from which he extracted them, and within a few pages, there is a fact stated by the same Colonel Arthur, which speaks still more unequivocally than they do as to the "comforts and advantages of the slave population of Honduras." Now it is strange that the honourable Gentleman, who so accurately recollects the eulogy, should so entirely have forgotten the fact; for the House will perceive, when I state it, that it is a fact calculated to make a pretty strong impression on a memory less powerful than that of the Member for Sandwich. The dispatch which contains it is from Colonel Arthur, dated October 21, 1816, just seventeen days prior to that other dispatch in which he lauds the condition of the Slaves in that colony, and describes himself as having been metamorphosed from a perfect Wilberforce into—something, no doubt, very superior. I will now read an extract from it. You will find the whole in the papers relative to Slaves, ordered to be printed on the 10th June, 1818; the very papers from which the honourable Member for Sandwich has drawn his quotations.

"Copy of a Letter from Lieut.-Col. Geo. Arthur to Earl Bathurst; with seven enclosures.

"Honduras, 21st October, 1816.—My Lord, I have the honour to report to your lordship, that an inhabitant of this settlement, named *Michael Carty*, embarked by

the last vessel which sailed for England, in order to obtain redress for the oppressive measures which he represents to have been exercised towards him by me.

" I could not have conceived it possible that this inhuman wretch was so destitute of all sense of shame, as to have taken such public means of promulgating his infamy; yet, as he has resolved upon it, I feel it necessary to transmit, for your lordship's information, the accompanying documents respecting him.

" By these papers your lordship will perceive, that this Carty was convicted before a special court, assembled for his trial, of having caused a poor young Negro female, his property, to be stripped naked, and her hands being tied to her feet with tight cords, a stick was passed under her knees and above the elbow-bend of her arms, a large cattle-chain was fastened round her neck with a padlock, and in this agonizing posture, exposed to the burning heat of the sun, was this wretched female tortured from morning until night; constantly, during that time, flogged with a severe cat by her inhuman master and servant, in the most wanton and barbarous manner: sometimes on her buttocks; at other times, being turned over on the stick, on her face and breasts."

Now, look at the evidence on which he was thus convicted.

" At a meeting of the Magistrates at the Court House, Belize, River's mouth, in Honduras, Thursday, August 29th, 1816.—Present, Marshall Bennett, Thomas Paslow, and Thomas Frain, esquires.

" J. B. Rabateau came before the magistrates, and stated upon oath as follows:—The day before yesterday I was at Mr. Orgill's, about half past twelve o'clock, and I heard somebody was crawling in Mr. Carty's yard; Mr. Orgill told me it was Mr. Carty that was flogging one of his wenches, and which was the third time that day; I went from the house into Mr. Orgill's yard, with Mr. Orgill and Joseph Belisle, and looked into Mr. Carty's yard, and

I saw a girl which Mr. Carty brought from Mrs. Burn's, on the ground, her two hands were tied to her feet, and a stick run under her knees and above the elbow-bend of the arm, and lying on her back perfectly naked, and he, Mr. Carty, was flogging her with a cat; after flogging her some time on her buttocks, he came round and struck her ten or twelve stripes over her breast and face, and after his flogging her thus, he called another woman of his and made her hold one end of the stick, and he, Mr. Carty, took hold of the other, and he turned her from lying on her back over her head, when she fell nearly on her face, and then he flogged her again on her buttocks; after this I went away, and some time after returned, when I saw Mr. Carty flog the girl again in the same position and manner as before. I was then in company with Mr. Orgill, Joseph Belisle, Martha Sloasher, Jeremia Myvett, William Adams, and John M'Gregor, who all saw the same. After this I went away, and about five o'clock returned to Mr. Orgill, and saw the girl fastened in the same position."

"The magistrates and officers of the court then examined the woman Quasheba, who appeared to have been much flogged, and her wrists much cut, apparently from having been tied, and had a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock."

"John M'Gregor sworn, deposed as follows:—The other day I had occasion to go into Mr. Carty's shop, with a Spaniard, to see some crockery ware; as I went into the shop, he, Carty, was just coming in from the yard, with a cat in his hand; this was about eleven o'clock. I went away; about four o'clock in the afternoon, I was in Mr. Orgill's yard, and I saw the girl Quasheba tied in Mr. Carty's yard; she was quite naked, and tied with her hands to her legs, and a stick run under the bend of the knees and above the bend of the arms; he was flogging her."

"John Antonia Portall sworn; and John M'Gregor sworn as interpreter:—Deposes, that he saw the girl Quasheba when tied, and saw her being punished by Mr. Carty;

that he sent his mate and the boatswain, who could talk English, to beg for the girl; that they went in and Mr. Carty said he would forgive her, but would put her in chains; and this was about half past four o'clock."

Now conceive a young female, her hands tied to her feet, a stick run under her knees and above the elbow-bend of her arm, and a merciless villain flogging her with a cat on the breast, the face, and every part of her body; and, as if insatiable in his barbarity, calling another woman of his and making her hold one end of the stick, he holding the other, and thus turning her, from lying on her back, over her head, when she fell nearly on her face; and then he flogging her again, in a manner too shocking, too brutal, too indecent for me to read. One witness saw this at half past twelve o'clock, and in that position he saw her again at five o'clock.

Observe, too, not only the intensity of the punishment, but how often it was repeated. The same witness, Mr. Rabateau, says, that at half past twelve o'clock Mr. Carty was flogging his wench for the third time that day. Another witness, M'Gregor, saw her tied in the same manner on the same spot at four o'clock, and Carty flogging her. Another witness, J. A. Portall, saw her undergoing this punishment at half past four o'clock. At five o'clock she is seen, for the last time that day, in the same position. Two days after, the "*wench*" is brought before the magistrates much flogged, much cut, with "a large cattle-chain fastened about her neck with a padlock."

On Carty's trial all this is proved; and what exemplary infliction awaits him? Let gentlemen consider his guilt, and what measure of punishment they, or any men with feelings unblunted by Slavery, would have dealt out to the convicted monster. Hear his sentence in the words of Colonel A. M. J. :

"Convicted of all this load of enormity; with the unfortunate young female before their eyes, lacerated in a manner the recital of which is shocking to humanity; her wounds festered to such a degree that her life was con-

sidered in the greatest danger ; still this picture of human misery, and human depravity, could not rouse a Honduras jury to award such a punishment against the offender (whom they found guilty to the utmost extent) as bespoke their commiseration for the former, or their detestation of the latter. Fifty pounds, Jamaica currency, equal to about thirty-five pounds sterling, was the penalty deemed adequate to the crimes of the offender ! a man in affluent circumstances, worth thousands of pounds ; and the poor female was doomed to remain the slave of this cruel wretch, still more exasperated against her than ever."

I know not whether the act itself is more enormous than the verdict. The act might only speak the cruelty of an individual ; the verdict betrays the tenor of feeling towards Slaves which prevails among the leading persons in the colony, the magistrates on the bench. Yes, Sir, it tells us, in language which cannot be mistaken, the degree of protection which the laws afford to the Negro, and the equal-handed justice which is dealt out between the slave and the master. Aye, and what a comment is it upon "the enjoyments and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras, a race of people truly to be envied by free labourers all over the world !" O wretched peasantry of England ! How would you mourn your fate, if you knew the comforts of which you are debarred ;—the indulgencies, denied indeed to you, but dealt out so liberally to the contented African in that terrestrial paradise for Slaves, Honduras !

The honourable Member for Taunton has said that the Negroes may complain of their lot, as the poor of this country may complain that they are not feasted on champagne and venison—a most blind and extravagant comparison ! Had this female nothing else to complain of but that she was denied the luxuries of life ? She might complain, and, in the name of thousands of these poor Negroes, I complain, that she and they are denied the common rights of human nature, and that they are mercilessly lashed and tortured at the will of their brutal masters. Let no man

imagine that this case of Carty is one of isolated cruelty: there stand upon record multitudes of cases of a description equally horrible. I did not choose, though accused of doing so, to appeal to the feelings of the House and the public: I determined to address their reason. I rested my case upon the moral degradation of the Negroes. But let the honourable Member for Sandwich, or the honourable Member for Taunton, who has, he tells us, seen Slavery, and who, seeing, has learned to admire it—who is quite captivated with the felicity of these Negroes, admitted by himself to be in the lowest state of moral degradation;—let either of these Gentlemen but hint a wish for a statement of particular and individual atrocities, and I am prepared, prepared with cases, authenticated by unquestionable evidence, which will shock and exasperate every honest man in the country.

Before I quit Carty's case, one word on the character of Colonel Arthur. It grieves me, Sir, that I am under the necessity; that I am bound, by the fidelity I owe to the cause I have undertaken, thus to comment upon the expressions he has used. I owe it to his general reputation to say he has made ample atonement for that idle language. For the last six years he has been a generous and brave defender of the Slaves. I believe that there does not exist a man who has done more for that wretched race, and who has suffered more persecution in consequence of his exertions; and I am grossly misinformed if he does not now, with further experience, bitterly repent of the error into which he was betrayed. I am content to be deemed an enthusiast, if Colonel Arthur be one who now considers the Negroes as any other than a most wretched and persecuted race.

The honourable Member for Taunton has complained most loudly of my having stated that there is no danger to be apprehended in the West Indies. Give me leave to say, the honourable Gentleman is as inaccurate in this as in his former assertion; for I stated that I expected nothing else but danger in the West Indies. I said, if I

recollect right, that wherever there is Slavery there is oppression. I told you, that if you wanted to be safe you must be just; that the price you pay for your injustice is your insecurity. I know there is danger. Danger! why? because the few inflict, and the multitude suffer, gross injustice. But I confess it does appear to me to be the most extraordinary of all arguments, to contend that the danger arises not from Slavery itself, but from the discussion of Slavery in this House. What, then, does the Slave require any hint from us that he is a Slave, and that Slavery is of all conditions the most miserable? Why, Sir, he hears this; he sees it; he feels it too, in all around him. He sees his harsh uncompensated labour; he hears the crack of the whip; he feels, he writhes, under the lash. Does not this betray the secret? This is no flattery; these are counsellors which feelingly persuade him what he is. He sees the mother of his children stripped naked before the gang of male Negroes, and flogged unmercifully; he sees his children sent to market to be sold at the best price they will fetch; he sees in himself, not a man, but a thing; by West-Indian law, a *chattel*, an implement of husbandry, a machine to produce sugar, a beast of burden! And will any man tell me that the Negro, with all this staring him in the face, flashing in his eyes, whether he rises in the morning or goes to bed at night, never dreams that there is injustice in such treatment, till he seats himself down to the perusal of an English newspaper, and there, to his astonishment, discovers that there are enthusiasts in England, who from the bottom of their hearts deplore, and, even more than they deplore, abhor all Negro Slavery? There are such enthusiasts; I am one of them; and while we breathe we will never abandon the cause, till that thing, that chattel, is reinstated in all the privileges of man.

I beg pardon of the House for having trespassed so long upon its patience, but I can assure honourable Members, that I should certainly not have troubled them at such length, had it not been for the observations of the honourable Gentleman. Before, however, I conclude, I

wish it to be clearly understood what is the point at which we are now arrived. If I understood the right honourable Gentleman rightly, the strong impression of his mind is, that the cart-whip may be wholly dispensed with ;—that females ought not to be flogged ;—that Sunday should be considered as the property of the slave, a day of rest and recreation ;—and that the slave shall have a legal title to property. I understand the right honourable Gentleman also to have said, that he was doubtful as to the admission of Negro evidence in all cases ; but that he was satisfied that the impediments to manumission should be removed, and that he is willing that the practice of *venditioni exponas* should be abolished. There, however, still remains one point, which has not yet been touched upon by the right honourable Gentleman,—I mean, allowing the slave to purchase out his freedom by a day at a time—a practice recommended not only by high authority, but also by its obvious justice.

There is still one other point, upon which I confess I did not receive quite the same satisfaction as I received upon the other propositions I submitted to the consideration of the House,—I mean, with respect to the freedom of children born after a certain period. What I understood the right honourable Gentleman to say upon this point was this ; “ If the honourable Gentleman asks me the question, whether the day shall never arrive on which children shall be free, I would answer peremptorily no.” Now I am anxious, before the close of this debate, to receive an explanation upon this most important point.

Mr. CANNING.—I wish to make myself intelligible to the honourable Gentleman and the House. If I am asked whether I can maintain the proposition that the progeny of slaves must be eternally slaves—the honourable Gentleman must feel that I am not at liberty to throw out a hasty opinion upon that, I readily admit, most important question ; but my opinion certainly is, that the time must come when that object must be attained. I cannot now,

however, state a distinct opinion further than this, that the progeny of slaves must not be eternally slaves.

Mr. F. Buxton said—Then I am to understand that the day will arrive after which every Negro child born shall be free. That being settled, my next question is, when will that day arrive?

Mr. Canning.—I say I abjure the principle of perpetual slavery, but I am not prepared now to state in what way I would set about the accomplishment of the object. I abjure the principle, but I am not now prepared to give my opinion upon the question, because my mind is not yet made up, and I am unwilling to say any thing to-night which may reduce me hereafter to the necessity of qualifying any statement I may make.

Mr. F. Buxton.—I am fully satisfied with the answer the right honourable Gentleman has been kind enough to give to my questions, and I feel obliged to him for the very candid and decisive manner in which he has expressed himself.—I now beg leave to withdraw my Motion; but I wish it to be distinctly understood, that, in case a difference of opinion arises between the Government and myself, I shall reserve to myself the liberty of bringing the matter forward on a future occasion.

The original Resolution was then withdrawn. The SPEAKER put the question upon the Amendment, and it was carried unanimously.



APPENDIX.

A.

*Occurrences in the Island of Barbadoes, referred to by
Mr. Buxton, (p. 6.)*

(Extracted from "Debates on the Slave Trade" in 1806, pp. 166-172.)

"IN some papers presented to the House of Commons on the 25th February, 1805, is contained a letter from Lord Seaforth, the Governor of Barbadoes, dated 13th November, 1804, in which he thus writes to Earl Camden:—

" 'I enclose four papers, containing, from different quarters, reports on the horrid murders I mentioned in some former letters. *They are selected from a great number, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts, though several of the letters are very concise and defective. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble than to get at the bottom of these businesses, so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people*'—(not of one or two, or of a few individuals, but of 'the PEOPLE.')

" In a subsequent letter, dated 7th January, 1805, his Lordship thus writes: 'I enclose the Attorney-General's letter to me on the subject of the Negroes *so most wantonly murdered*. I am sorry to say, SEVERAL OTHER INSTANCES OF THE SAME BARBARITY have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as *I only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general.*'

" The letters to which Lord Seaforth refers, and which accompany the above extracts, are from four of the most respectable individuals in the Island of Barbadoes, viz. Mr. Ince, the President of the Council; Mr. Coulthurst, the Advocate-General; Mr. Baccles, the Attorney-General; and the Rev.

Mr. Pilgrim. These Gentlemen all agree in the material facts of the cases which they state. It would, therefore, be an unnecessary repetition to transcribe the whole of their letters : it will be sufficient to give the substance of the statements which they contain.

" 1. On the 10th of April, 1804, a militia-man of the name of Halls, of the St. Michael's regiment, returning from military duty, overtook on the road some Negroes who were going quietly home from their labour. When he came near, he called out that he would kill them, and immediately began to run after them. The Negroes, not supposing that he really intended to do them any injury, and imagining that he was in joke, did not endeavour to escape, but merely made way for him. The person nearest to him happened to be a woman, the property of a M. Clarke, the owner of Simmons's estate, who is stated to have been a valuable slave, the mother of five or six children, and far advanced in pregnancy. *Without the smallest provocation of any kind, Halls coolly and deliberately plunged his bayonet several times into her body, when the poor creature dropped, and expired without a groan.* Two gentlemen were eye-witnesses of this horrid action. One of them, Mr. Harding, the manager of the Codrington College estate, went up to Halls and spoke harshly to him, and said he ought to be hanged, for he never saw a more unprovoked murder, and that he would certainly carry him before a magistrate. Halls's reply is very remarkable. '*For what?*' said he (with the utmost indifference as to the crime)—'*for what? FOR KILLING A NEGRO !!!*' This is a short but a significant sentence, strongly confirming an important truth, which has frequently been asserted, viz. that the Negroes are regarded by their white-skinned oppressors as an inferior order of beings, and, under the influence of this sentiment, are naturally enough denied the common rights of humanity, and excluded from the pale of that sympathy which a sense of a common nature and a common extraction is calculated to inspire. Mr. Harding, however, greatly to his credit, was proof against the force of Halls's compendious reasoning ; and, having procured assistance, laid hold of him, and carried him before Mr. Justice Walton. Mr. Justice Walton, it would appear, was not indisposed to use the authority with which he was vested in

bringing Halls to justice; but he found, that 'in his situation as a magistrate, the law of the island gave him no jurisdiction or authority over him,' and, in short, that he had no right to commit him. In this dilemma, Mr. Walton applied to Mr. President Ince. 'I told Mr. Walton,' says the President, in his letter to Lord Seaforth, 'that I regretted, with real concern, the deficiency in our law: but that there was a penalty due to the King in such cases,' (viz. the ELEVEN POUNDS FOUR SHILLINGS); 'and that, as Mr. Harding had sufficiently substantiated the fact, I would order him to be committed till he paid the forfeiture, or a suit should be commenced against him.' Accordingly he was sent to prison.

"2. The second instance produced by Lord Seaforth is not inferior in atrocity to the first. A Mr. Colbeck, who lives overseer on Cabbage-tree plantation, in St. Lucy's parish, '*had bought a new Negro boy out of the yard*' (meaning the Slave yard, where Negroes are exposed to sale, in the same manner as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield market), and carried him home. Conceiving a liking to the boy, he took him into the house and made him wait at table. Mr. Crone, the overseer of Rowe's estate, which is near to Cabbage-tree plantation, was in the habit of visiting Mr. Colbeck, *had noticed the boy, and knew him well*. A fire happening one night in the neighbourhood, Colbeck went to give his assistance, and the boy followed him. Colbeck, on his return home, missed the boy, who had lost his way; and as he did not make his appearance the next day, he sent round to his neighbours, and *particularly to Crone*, informing them, that his African lad had strayed, that *he could not speak a word of English*, and possibly he might be found breaking some sugar, canes, or taking something else for his support: in which case he requested they would not injure him, but send him home, and he would pay any damage the boy might have committed. After a lapse of two or three days, the poor creature was discovered in a gulley (or deep water-course) near to Rowe's estate; and a number of Negroes were soon assembled about the place. The boy, naturally terrified with the threats, the noise, and the appearance of so many people, retreated into a hole in a rock, having a stone in his hand, for the purpose, probably, of defence. By this time, Crone, and some other White persons, had come up. *By their*

*orders a fire was put to the hole where the boy lay, who, when he began to be scorched, ran from his hiding-place into a pool of water which was near. Some of the Negroes pursued him into the pool; and the boy, it is said, threw the stone which he held in his hand at one of them. On this, two of the White men, Crone and Hollingsworth, fired at the boy several times with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition; for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot that it was like a cullender. The White savages (this is the language of Mr. Attorney-General Beccles) ordered the Negroes to dig a grave. Whilst they were digging it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him: but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it and covered over, and, as is believed, WHILE YET ALIVE. Colbeck, the owner of the boy, hearing that a Negro had been killed, went to Crone to inquire into the truth of the report. Crone told him, that a Negro had been killed and buried, but assured him it was not his, for he knew him well, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. On this, Colbeck went away SATISFIED! Receiving, however, further information, he returned, and had the grave opened, when he found the murdered Negro to be his own. Colbeck brought his action of damages in the courts of the island against Crone and Hollingsworth. The cause was ready to be tried, and the Court had met for the purpose, when they thought proper to pay double the value of the boy, and 25*l.* for the use of the island, (being 5*l.* less than the penalty fixed by law, of 15*l.* currency each), rather than suffer the business to go to a hearing. ‘This, I am truly sorry to say,’ observes the Advocate-General, ‘was the only punishment which could be inflicted for so barbarous and atrocious a crime.’*

“This horrid recital (which is given almost in the words of the Report, merely avoiding repetition) seems to require little comment. One circumstance of it, however, may not strike the minds of some readers with its due force, although it appears to be the most affecting part of the whole case. Colbeck, it is said, on hearing that it was not his slave who had been murdered, WENT AWAY SATISFIED! O most opprobrious

satisfaction! The preceding part of the narrative had prepared us to expect in Colbeck some approximation to European feeling. But what is the fact? On being coolly told that a Negro had been killed and buried—told so by his neighbour, the murderer—is he shocked? Does he express any horror or indignation on the occasion? No! he goes away *satisfied!!* Let the reader give its due weight to this one circumstance, and he must be convinced that a state of society must exist in the West Indies, of which, as an inhabitant of this happy island, he can scarcely form any adequate conception. Suppose, instead of a Negro Slave, that it had been a horse which had been thus killed: Colbeck, had his horse happened to be missing at the time, would have pursued exactly the same steps, and would have been affected in the same way as in the present instance.—We may also learn, from this impressive circumstance, the value of West-Indian testimony when given in favour of West-Indian humanity. The moral perceptions and feelings which prevail in that quarter of the world, it will be perceived, are wholly different from those on this side of the Atlantic. It may be allowed that these men mean what they say, when they give each other the praise of humanity. But examine their standard. Who is this man of humanity? It is one, who, hearing that a fellow-creature has been cruelly and wantonly murdered, *goes away satisfied*, because he himself has sustained no loss by the murder! An exception may be admitted in favour of a few men of enlightened minds; but the remark applies to *the people*—to the bulk of the community, whose prejudices are stated by Lord Seaforth to be so *horribly absurd* as to resist all measures for remedying this dreadful state of things. But, not to detain the reader any longer with reasonings on this subject, let us proceed to the third case communicated by Lord Seaforth, and which, if possible, is worse than either of the foregoing.

“3. A man of the name of Nowell, who lives in St. Andrew’s parish, had been in the habit of behaving brutally towards his wife, and one day went so far as to lock her up in a room, and confine her in chains. A negro woman belonging to this man, *touched with compassion for her unfortunate mistress*, undertook privately to release her. Nowell found it out, and in order to punish her, obliged her to put her tongue through a hole in a board, to which he fastened it on the op-

posite side with a fork, and left her in that situation for some time. He afterwards cut out her tongue nearly by the root, in consequence of which she almost instantly died. No punishment followed this monstrous act of barbarity.

"It will, doubtless, be argued, that individual instances of cruelty like those which have been cited, are no proofs of *general* inhumanity, any more than the annals of the Old Bailey can be considered as exhibiting a fair view of our national character. There is, however, this very remarkable difference in the two cases, a difference which is fatal to the argument. In this country, when we read of crimes, we read of their being followed by just retribution; by severe and exemplary punishment. In the West Indies, on the contrary, we not only hear of the greatest crimes escaping with impunity, but find the laws themselves conspiring to shelter criminals from justice: we find the most respectable and enlightened part of the community sanctioning the perpetration even of murder, by their refusal to recognize the commission of it as a felonious act."

B.

Observations on Mr. Canning's Speech.

WE are very far from intending to comment in any unfriendly spirit on what fell from Mr. Canning on this occasion. But his speech has suggested a few observations, which justice to our cause requires that we should not suppress.

1. We are by no means disposed to regard the discussion of this question in Parliament as so pregnant with danger that "one rash word, one too ardent expression," uttered there, may raise "a flame" among the Slaves in the West Indies, "not easily to be extinguished." That such an apprehension is, to say the least, greatly exaggerated, may be seen by referring to a pamphlet published by this Society, and sold by Hatchard, entitled, "A Review of some of the Arguments which are commonly advanced against Parliamentary Interference in behalf of the Negro Slaves," p. 3—12.

Is there, then, we shall be asked, no danger of commotion among the Slaves in our colonies? Undoubtedly there is; but not from the efforts which may be made in Parliament for their relief. Of these, it would scarcely, we apprehend, be too much to say, that they know almost as little as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield knew of Mr. Martin's benevolent and persevering efforts to protect them from the cruelty of man. The real source of danger is to be found in the oppressive nature of colonial bondage; and in the resistance which, under the influence of passion and prejudice, the colonists may be led to make to the measures which Parliament may adopt for alleviating its pressure. A reform in which the colonists heartily concurred would obviate all danger from public discussion. It would farther obviate the far more formidable danger to be apprehended from the influence of the spectacle exhibited within the visible horizon of Jamaica—the spectacle, we mean, of Negro liberty in St. Domingo, achieved by blood and violence, and triumphant over the most powerful obstacles. And here, is it unseasonable to ask, whether any thing can prove so strongly the inaptitude of the Slaves to be roused to insubordination and revolt, by any events except those which press immediately on their senses, as this,—that the example of the neighbouring island of St. Domingo should have been placed for thirty years before their eyes, without producing the slightest perceptible effect on their habits of quiet submission? And yet we are expected to believe, that even one rash word uttered in St. Stephen's Chapel, at the distance of 8000 miles, may raise an inextinguishable flame of mutiny among them. They have remained unaffected by the sight of their fellows successfully wading through blood to liberty: they are, nevertheless, to be inflamed to insurrection by the echo of some abstract propositions propounded in the House of Commons: although there is no obvious mode by which the intelligence can be wafted to their ears; and although, if they heard it, they would not be able to comprehend its import.

Major Gaisford, of the Engineers, who passed upwards of four years in the West Indies, published, in 1811, some observations on the subject of colonial slavery. The following extract from his work is applicable to the subject we are now considering.—

"The British Parliament," he remarks, "omitted certain expressions in the original preamble to the Abolition Act, lest they might be interpreted to give a sanction to revolt or disaffection among the Negroes. The total ignorance of this class of beings, regarding the transactions of society, renders such a caution at present needless. It is certain, the noble exertions of the British Parliament to better their condition are but very partially known by the Blacks in the West Indies. The stories told of their gratitude to the promoters of abolition, I am inclined to aver, are generally fabrications."—"To ask a Negro Slave to repeat the English alphabet would be almost as generally an imputation of weakness, as to ask a chimney-sweep's apprentice to recite Mahomet's Koran."

In the Correspondence relative to the condition and treatment of Slaves at Honduras, laid on the table of the House of Commons on the 16th of June 1823, some important light is thrown on the ordinary causes of servile insurrection. In May 1820, a considerable number of Slaves broke out into revolt. Colonel Arthur, the superintendant, while he made all the necessary arrangements for reducing the insurgents by force, resolved first to try "the milder means of persuasion to bring these poor deluded people to a due sense of the impropriety of their conduct." "In my progress up the river," observes Colonel Arthur, "I was much concerned to ascertain that the Negroes, who had first deserted and excited others to join them, HAD BEEN TREATED WITH VERY UNNECESSARY HARSHNESS BY THEIR OWNERS, and HAD CERTAINLY GOOD GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINT, if happily they had pursued that course, rather than having resorted to the unlawful means they were pursuing. But, as their animosity had not led them to any greater excess than the destruction of some cattle, and the robbery of one or two houses, a proclamation was issued, offering a free pardon to all such as would immediately come in and lay down their arms; but at the same time martial law was proclaimed, and a liberal reward for the apprehension of all who should continue in a state of rebellion. I then proceeded from work to work, to the distance of 220 miles up the river Belize, directing the different gangs of Slaves to be assembled; and by THUS TIMELY INQUIRING INTO THEIR SEVERAL GRIEVANCES, causing the proclamation to

be read, and pointing out to them the fatal consequences they would bring upon themselves, the evil seemed happily staid, and many, who had been hastily led to unite with the disaffected, were induced to return peaceably to their works. I cannot ascertain that the number now remaining of the principal body in the river Belize exceeds twenty."—"I feel it an unspeakable mercy that the country has been thus delivered by the hand of Providence from a commotion which at first appeared to threaten very alarming consequences; and I trust the gratitude of the Settlers will be fully awakened on the occasion, and evidenced by *increased acts of uniform kindness and humanity towards the poor Slave population.*"

If we compare the proceedings above detailed with those which took place in Barbadoes in 1816, on the occasion of the insurrection in that island, we cannot fail to be struck with the contrast which the wise forbearance displayed in the former instance, and the happy results produced by it, exhibit to the headlong and inconsiderate fury, and the consequent disasters, and carnage, which marked the latter. No parley with the misguided Slaves was thought of by the Barbadian authorities.

To conclude, whatever be the danger of insurrection among the Slaves, it is far less likely to be increased by the interference of Parliament, with a view to mitigate the rigours of their bondage, than by the attempt to veil the real nature of that bondage, and to obstruct the application of an effectual remedy to its evils. The danger lies in continuing to oppress after the oppression is acknowledged, and not in taking effectual measures for the relief of those who groan under it.

2. Why, it is asked, did Mr. Buxton "go back to a state of things in the West Indies to which, so far as they could be remedied, a remedy has been applied?" (p. 23.)

We are not aware of the remedies to which allusion is here made; indeed, we know of no remedies which had been applied to the various evils stated by Mr. Buxton to belong to the West-Indian system. The Slaves had not ceased to be chattels;—no means of education had been provided for them;—no effective steps had been taken for their religious improvement;—they were still denied the Sabbath;—the marriage tie was still unknown among them;—and to that hour every Slave, male or female, might by law have been punished,

without one reason being assigned, not only with any length of confinement, but with thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip on the naked body ; and might have been compelled to labour, willing or unwilling, without wages, by the impulse of the same cruel instrument. And with respect to the instances Mr. Buxton adduced of unpunished outrages of the grossest kind in Barbadoes, what is the remedy which has been applied ? The only remedy we know of, is a reluctant enactment of the Barbadoes legislature, entitled " an Act for the *better protection* of the Slaves of this Island," and which provides, not simply that the wilful murder of a Slave shall henceforward be punished as a capital felony, but that " if any person shall hereafter wilfully, maliciously, *wantonly*, and WITHOUT PROVOCATION, kill and murder any Slave," he shall be deemed guilty of felony without benefit of clergy.

Surely it was of some importance to shew what was the spirit which had animated the conduct and guided the legislation of our Colonists, when it became a question whether to them was to be entrusted the task of reforming colonial abuses, and of providing for the effectual protection and comfort, the improvement and happiness of the Negroes.

3. But why, it is again asked, did Mr. Buxton " go out of his way to recal the horrors of the now abolished Slave Trade," and " to throw in the teeth of those whose interests are at hazard, cruelties with which in fact they had no concern ? " (p. 24.)

But can it be said that the West Indians had no concern in the horrors and cruelties of the Slave Trade, when, for nearly twenty years after those horrors and cruelties had been fully developed, they successfully employed the whole weight of their influence to prevent their abolition ? But it was evidently for other purposes than that of unnecessary reproach that reference was made to the part which the West Indians had acted in the Slave Trade question. It ought to be carefully noted, that the ground on which they so obstinately and vehemently opposed every attempt to abolish the Slave Trade was, that the ruin of the West Indies would be the inevitable consequence of the measure, which would necessarily issue, according to them, in an insurrection of the Slaves, and, if not, yet in the loss of the whole of the capital embarked in the West Indies. Notwithstanding all this, however, they now admit that its tendency, instead of

being injurious, was beneficial, and that the ruin they predicted to follow from it was in fact only averted by its adoption. And was no useful lesson to be learned, with respect to the present question, from a retrospective view of what then occurred? Or would it be right to allow those, who so grievously mistook their true interests on the former occasion, and who, under the influence of that mistake, could lend themselves to the support of what Mr. Pitt stigmatized as "the greatest practical evil which ever afflicted the human race," to have credit given them now for taking a calm and judicious view of a question where prejudice and passion were likely to operate with still more uncontrollable influence? Had the concurrence of the West Indians been anticipated in the proposed plans of reform, doubtless, as a matter of prudence, any reference to such topics might have been omitted; but anticipating rather their opposition, it would have been doing injustice to the cause to have omitted them.

Be it remembered, that if Mr. Buxton was wrong in this, the same blame attaches to Mr. Huskisson, who, on Mr. Whitmore's motion for a Committee on East and West India sugar, though advocating the cause of the West Indians, broadly stated the same fact, namely, that for a long period of successive years, the West Indians, utterly mistaking their own true interests, had constantly and violently opposed the abolition of the Slave Trade.

But even if there had been no such reason for referring to the history of the Slave Trade, was it of no moment that the House should be reminded of the foul origin of that Slavery whose lineaments the mover was tracing? Was it of no moment that the House should be reminded, that many of the practices which are inherent in the existing system of Colonial Slavery, are in their nature and effects identically the same with the worst practices of the Slave Trade; and that, while we are justly reprobating in the face of Europe these practices, when perpetrated by the contraband Slave-traders of France or Portugal, we are guilty of a strange inconsistency by sanctioning in our own Colonies practices scarcely less immoral, inhuman, and unjust?

4. Mr. Buxton was further asked, "why, when he was stirring a question totally new, he should mix it up with that

other odious question of the Slave Trade, *with which it was never before placed in juxta-position but for the purpose of being contrasted with, and separated from, it.* In all former discussions on the Slave Trade *the ulterior purpose of emancipation was studiously disclaimed.* Slavery, *not willingly but necessarily,* was allowed to continue."

We apprehend, however, that the question mooted by Mr. Buxton was not a question *totally new*; and also that it had always been mixed up with the question of the Slave Trade, and placed in juxta-position with it, not for the purpose of contrast and separation, but for the purpose of increasing the odium belonging to that traffic, and of giving the last aggravation to its horrors. So far, moreover, was the purpose of emancipation from having been studiously disclaimed, that one of the standing arguments in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade was, that it was absolutely necessary, and that it would infallibly lead, to the amelioration of the state of Slavery in the West Indies, and to the ultimate emancipation of the Slaves. That the Abolitionists were mistaken in their reasoning upon this point, is perfectly true. Slavery has proved a much more inveterate evil than they had anticipated, and it has not yielded, as they expected it would, to the meliorating effects of an abolition of the Slave Trade. But, still, it is no less true that the extinction of *slavery* itself was, and was avowed to be, one of their grand ulterior objects in inducing Parliament to abolish the Slave Trade.

The proofs which may be exhibited in support of this view of the case are numerous and irrefragable.

In the year 1788, a Committee of the Privy Council was appointed to inquire into the nature and effects of the *Slave Trade*. The greater part of their voluminous Report, however, is taken up with a view of the *Slavery* existing in the West Indies. The two subjects of Slave Trade and Slavery were evidently considered by his Majesty's Government as parts of one great question, and their inquiries were equally directed to both. It is only necessary to turn over the leaves of the Privy Council Report to be convinced of this.

On the 21st of May 1789, the House of Commons resolved to examine evidence on the subject of the *Slave Trade*. The examination was prolonged during a great part of three

sessions of Parliament, until the 5th of April 1791; and whoever will take the trouble to look at that evidence, will find that at least one-half of it refers to the state of *Slavery* in the West Indies. At the commencement of this inquiry, namely, on the 29th of May 1789, a motion was made by Mr. Tierney to separate the African from the West-Indian part of the question; but this motion was overruled by Mr. Pitt; and, in point of fact, seventy-eight witnesses were examined on the West Indian, and only forty on the African part of the question.

In April 1791, a debate of two days' continuance took place in the House of Commons, on a motion made by Mr. Wilberforce for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. More than half of the speeches of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Francis, Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and other advocates of the abolition, turned on the state of *Slavery* in the West Indies. Even in that early debate, Mr. Pitt entered on the question of emancipating the Slaves. "A rash emancipation, indeed, he was clear, would be wrong and mischievous. In that unhappy situation to which our baneful conduct had brought both ourselves and them, it would be no justice on either side to give them liberty. They might be relieved from every thing harsh and severe, raised from their present degradation, and put under the proper protection of the law: till then, to talk of emancipation was insanity. But it was the system of fresh importations that interfered with these principles of improvement; and *it was the abolition of the Slave Trade that would furnish the means of effectually regulating the situation of the Slaves in the islands.*" —What can more decisively shew, that from the first the emancipation of the Slaves in the West Indies, so far from being disclaimed by the Abolitionists, was openly avowed by them as an ultimate object, although, considering the novelty of the whole subject, the idea of *immediately* emancipating large bodies of *newly imported* Africans might be fairly viewed with much serious alarm.

The whole course of the Slave Trade controversy proves incontestably the same point. In 1792, when Mr. Dundas proposed to abolish the Slave Trade and Slavery together, by means of regulations to be carried into effect in the West Indies, what was the reply on the part of the Abolitionists? It was, "No, abolish the *Slave Trade* immediately, and you

will arrive much more surely and rapidly at the ulterior ends of improvement and emancipation in the West Indies than by means of internal regulations." Such also was the language held by them on the motion of Mr. Francis, in 1796, and on that of Mr. Charles Ellis in 1797. And during every subsequent discussion, to the very moment of abolishing the Slave Trade, they never ceased to argue that that measure would certainly tend to the improvement of the condition of the Slaves in the West Indies, and to their final emancipation. Nay, this was the very line of argument pursued by Mr. Canning in his memorable speech in 1799, wherein he endeavoured to shew that to abolish the Slave Trade was the surest means of improving the state of Slavery in the West Indies. In his speech in 1807 he took the same ground.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that in 1807, when the Bill for abolishing the Slave Trade was in its progress through the House of Commons, the Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Percy, to his immortal honour, moved a resolution for giving freedom to all children born in the West Indies from the 1st of January 1810; which motion was withdrawn, at the suggestion of abolitionists, on the ground that the end they had in view would be more effectually accomplished by the benefits which would necessarily result from the abolition of the Slave Trade, than by directly interfering in colonial legislation.

We beg to refer the reader, for a farther elucidation of this subject, to the Pamphlet already referred to, "A Review of some of the Arguments," &c. pp. 20—30.

We have already freely admitted that the Abolitionists were mistaken in supposing that an Act of Parliament abolishing the Slave Trade would certainly lead to the improvement of the condition of the Slaves and to their ultimate emancipation. They expected too much from the colonists and the colonial legislatures. But their error in this respect is as far as possible from proving that either the question mooted by Mr. Buxton was a *totally new question*, or that it had never before been placed in juxta-position with the Slave Trade but for the purpose of being contrasted with and separated from it; or that the ulterior purpose of emancipation had always been studiously disclaimed by the Abolitionists. What was the Registry Bill, but a measure which was intended to pave the

way for the final emancipation of the Slaves? This was distinctly avowed in the Report of the African Institution on the subject, which has been quoted by Mr. Ellis above, (p. 58.) To the views of that Report Mr. Ellis expresses himself favourable. Had he, and the West Indians generally, been equally favourable to them in 1815, and had an *effective* Registry on Mr. Wilberforce's plan been then established in the Colonies, fresh efforts in behalf of the Slaves might not have been needed. As matters are, they have become indispensable. How could it have been supposed for one moment, that it was either intended or promised by the Abolitionists, that, having put an end to the Slave Trade, they were thenceforth to abandon all care for its victims, placed in our own colonies, and within our own jurisdiction. To have done so, or to have even thought of doing so, would indeed have been a just subject of reproach.

5. It seems hardly necessary to observe, that there is no part of Mr. Buxton's speech which can be construed as intimating that "we must deal with this subject, not as a matter of justice and judgment, but of impulse and feeling." From another expression it might possibly be inferred that Mr. Buxton's proposition had it in view "unhesitatingly and rashly to level at a blow the whole West India system." His proposition, however, was, that slavery ought to be *gradually* abolished. Our object, he says, is "*not the rapid termination* of that state, *not the sudden emancipation* of the Negro; but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as *by slow degrees*, and *in a course of years*, shall *gently* conduct us to the annihilation of slavery," &c.

6. We readily admit that it was not the intention of our Saviour, or of his Apostles, to interfere directly with the civil institutions of the Pagan world, and, among these, with the slavery which then prevailed. It was their purpose to furnish in the Gospel, to bond as well as free, an effectual remedy for their moral disorders; and to impart to them that hope full of immortality which should console and elevate them in circumstances the most painful and degrading. But while we admit all this, we cannot by any means admit that the obligations and duties of the Government and Parliament of Great Britain are to be

deduced from such precedents as those of ancient Greece and Rome. We are told by our legal authorities, that the Christian religion is a part, nay, the very basis, of the law of the land; and we also ourselves profess to be Christians. It would seem, therefore, that if the Government and the Parliament, instead of adopting the spirit of that religion into their proceedings, and regulating their conduct by a regard to its obligations, should proceed in the neglect or contravention both of its spirit and its precepts, they would ill defend themselves by a delusive and inapplicable reference to the conduct of the heathen governments which existed in the infancy of Christianity. The governments of that period could not, of course, be influenced by the spirit and precepts of a religion which they had not embraced. But when they had embraced it, they were unquestionably as much bound to act in conformity to it, as the meanest of their subjects. In this country, at the present time, we have not only a Government and a Parliament, but a whole community (including the West-Indian planters themselves) who call themselves Christian, and profess to be governed by the injunctions of the Gospel. Are they, then, not to be reminded of their Christian duties? Are they not to be told that it is their clear and unambiguous and indispensable obligation to act in the spirit, and in obedience to the precepts, of the religion they profess, and which, it is admitted, is not only a part of the law of the land, but has expressly been given to guide the conduct of every individual, not only in private and domestic, but in social and civil life? Surely, then, we may be allowed to consider what the Christian religion requires of us in any given case, and also to remind our fellow-Christians of its requisitions, without exciting pointed allusions to ill times. Is it not a fair and legitimate appeal to any individual, to say to him, "You are a Christian: why do you oppress your servants, why do you act so unkindly towards your wife and children, why do you defraud the revenue, or encroach on your neighbour's rights?" Or may we not prefer a similar appeal to Christian governments, and say, "Why do you permit robbery and murder to be committed by your subjects, as in the case of the Slave Trade; or why do you permit them to oppress and degrade their fellows, as in the case of Slavery; to exact their labour without return, and to deprive them of protection from law?" Even the direct introduction of Christianity in such cases as these

appears to us to be perfectly consistent with sound reason and good taste, and can be justly offensive only to those who are unwilling to have their conduct tried by it, or to abandon the practices which it proscribes.—It is not, be it remembered, to those who are still, to our disgrace, the Pagan Slaves of the West Indies, that this appeal is made. *They* are not told that it is their duty or their right to emancipate themselves. On the contrary, they would be told, if they were Christians, and such as are Christians are told, that they must “be obedient to them that are their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling; in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”

But are not Christian Masters and Christian Governments to be admonished of their duties also? Are not the former to be told that they must give unto their Slaves “that which is *JUST* and *EQUAL*, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven?” And are not both to be reminded, that it is their duty in the sight of God “to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” And are not the whole population of the United Kingdom to be warned, that, if they forbear to lift up their voice against the flagrant evil of Slavery, so long as a particle of it remains to disgrace the character of our country, they are violating their clear and unquestionable obligations as Christians? The conduct which the Pagan Government of Rome and their Pagan subjects pursued, or were left to pursue, with respect to *their* Slaves, is clearly no precedent for us, and can afford no justification to the Christian Government and Parliament of Great Britain, or to their Christian subjects, should they, adhering to that ill precedent, drawn from ill times, refuse to act on those principles which as Christians they cannot deny to be binding on them.

There are, undoubtedly, many evils which laws cannot cure. West-Indian Slavery is not an evil of this description. It is an evil which exists only by the sanction of a Christian Government, and which that Christian government has it completely in its power immediately to mitigate and finally extinguish.

7. A similar remark applies to the position, that, property being the creation of law, and law having sanctioned this species of property, we must be cautious how we meddle with it. But it is incumbent on those who may have so abused the power of legislation as to have transferred, to the possession and disposal of another, a man's dearest and most unquestionable property,—his bodily frame, his limbs, his muscles, his bones, his sweat, his health, his liberty—it is surely incumbent on them to repeal so cruel and iniquitous a law, and to compensate, to him who may have acquired property under it, the loss he may sustain from the performance of this act of justice.

8. We have no clear idea of the ground of the objection here made to the liberation of the children of Slaves to be henceforward born. Can we possibly suppose that parents would be dissatisfied to see their children placed in more favourable circumstances than themselves? Universal experience is adverse to such a supposition. What exertions will not parents, in the very lowest walks of life in this country, make to elevate their children above their own condition? And it is a notorious fact, that in a variety of cases, even among Slaves, nay, it is believed that in a considerable majority of cases, where a parent has acquired late in life the power of purchasing his own freedom, he prefers employing it to redeem his child rather than himself.

But, besides this, the liberation of children henceforward to be born can be attended with no assignable danger either to themselves or to the community. If we neglect so to educate them that they may be in a capacity to fulfil the duties of peaceable and industrious citizens, the fault will be ours.—With respect to the adults, we will not deny it to be *possible* that some, or even many of them, may be found to be so debased and brutified by their bondage, that to give them unconditional liberty might be as improper, and as little for their benefit, as to release indiscriminately from their confinement all the inhabitants of Bedlam. Still, that can be no valid reason for not giving them the amplest facilities, as is done in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, of purchasing their freedom, if they will but exercise the degree of industry, frugality, and forethought, which is necessary to that end. In this way those will have an opportunity of attaining their freedom who are the most likely to

improve that possession to beneficial purposes. The prospect of obtaining it by peaceful means will take away from them the very desire to employ force for that end ; indeed, will make them to dread commotion or insurrection, as putting to hazard, if not annihilating, all their hopes ; and will thus render them the best guarantees of the public peace. Let the spring of hope be set in motion, and the rest will follow in order :—their industry will be quickened ; they will become steady, provident, and faithful ; their exertions to achieve their freedom will be the very best preparation for its use and enjoyment ; and, almost insensibly, the now degraded slave will be converted into the industrious and peaceable peasant.

C.

"The Honourable Member for Bramber admitted that we had not a right to pay a debt of African humanity with West-Indian property." (p. 46.)

DOUBTLESS the honourable Member for Bramber would be ready to admit this. What he did insist upon, however, in the speech alluded to by Mr. Ellis, was not what that honourable Gentleman has here made him to say. What he did say was, that "we had no right to pay our debt to the West Indians," whatever might be its amount, "from African pockets ;"—in other words, that we had no right to indemnify the West Indians for any claims they may have upon us, in case we oblige them to abandon the ways of crime, by prolonging the uncompensated toil and the misery of those whom we and they have in common so deeply injured. We are perfectly willing, indeed, to admit, that the parliament and people of this country have had a large share in the guilt of both the African Slave Trade and West-Indian Slavery ; but we cannot allow that the West Indians are at liberty to disclaim all participation in that guilt, especially as it is they who have enjoyed for so many years, and still enjoy, the usufruct of the common crime ; and as they have, moreover, uniformly resisted every attempt on the part of their accomplices (the British Parliament and Public) to

repair their admitted wrongs. The Parliament of Great Britain, it is true, encouraged and sanctioned both the Slave Trade and Slavery. Their guilt, therefore, is undeniable. But, still, it cannot be said to have been the Parliament or the Public of Great Britain who reduced the unhappy Negro to his present condition. It was not they who placed him under the driver's lash, taking from him every motive to exertion but that of fear; who withheld from him the Christian Sabbath, and the consolations of the Gospel; who refused him the humanizing influence of the marriage tie, and all the endearing relations of domestic life; and who, instead of regarding him as a fellow-man, endued with an immortal soul, classed him in estimation and in treatment with the beasts that perish. It was not the Parliament or the Public of Great Britain who enacted a code of laws characterized by a spirit of contempt and hatred towards this unhappy race; who by the severity of exaction and the scantiness of sustenance brought them down by thousands to an untimely and miserable grave, converting the West Indies into a charnel-house for Africa; who dried up, by their oppression and neglect, the very sources of population in a race peculiarly prolific; who said, Let those Negroes never cease to be slaves, and let their backs be ever bowed down; and who fenced round this tremendous decree dooming them and their posterity to hopeless and interminable bondage, by regulations that obstructed enfranchisement, even when proffered to them by their masters' kindness. No one can believe that the Parliament and People of Great Britain would have permitted the establishment or continuance of such a system, had they fully known its real nature. Had the West-Indian authorities and the West-Indian planters, when examined before the Privy Council and Parliament, in the commencement of the Slave-trade controversy, admitted even as much as they now admit (after the lapse of many years of alleged improvement,) with respect to the actual condition of their bondsmen, scarcely a vestige of that cruel state would by this time have survived. It would not, it could not have been tolerated. Its existence would ere this time have become matter of history.

We freely admit the humanity and benevolence of not a few West-Indian proprietors, and gladly do homage to the feelings which have led them to make costly sacrifices for the temporal

and spiritual well-being of their slaves. But of one grand and fatal delinquency we doubt whether we can acquit any of them,—we mean, that of having shrunk from the duty of publicly denouncing the enormities of the colonial system, and of lending their cordial exertions to the discovery and application of effectual remedies. They have not only not done this, which it was their clear and imperative duty to have done, but they have been too ready to throw the shield of their talents, character, and influence over the worst parts of the system, when attacked by others. Instead of watching with becoming jealousy the proceedings of the local authorities, and exposing their specious but delusive pretences of reform; they have been forward to justify their conduct. And when atrocities have been brought to light, and held up to the public reprobation, some of them have seemed to sympathize with the perpetrators of these atrocities, rather than with their indignant accusers. With access to ample means of information, what cruelty have *they* ever brought to light? Which of the horrors of the system have they ever called upon Parliament to extinguish? With a thorough knowledge, for example, of the systematic desecration of the Sabbath, what single effectual step have they ever taken to reform the evil? Urged for thirty-five years to stop the fatal progress of depopulation, by instituting marriage among the slaves, and rendering that sacred tie not only legal but inviolable, what single measure have they adopted to that end? Look again at the whole moral and religious aspect of the West Indies. See, but for the labours of a few slandered missionaries, whose efforts may have served to rescue a small portion of the slaves from the grossest ignorance and vice, the whole Negro population of Jamaica, baptized and unbaptized, still sunk, after a British possession of nearly two centuries, in darkness and immorality worse than what Africa itself exhibits. What defence have they here? We do not ask what has been their success; but what have been their attempts? They have been content to do nothing themselves, and have been ready to frown on those who have endeavoured to excite attention to the subject.

Let it not be supposed that these topics are now adverted to for the purpose of venting reproaches against the West Indians, or for any invidious purpose whatsoever. They are

adverted to solely in the hope, that, called to review the past, the able and respectable individuals to whom we have alluded may now see it to be their duty to take a forward and an active part in the great work of humanity and justice which lies before them; that, no longer hostile, or at best lukewarm or indifferent to the subject, they should now throw the weight of their character, talents, and influence on the side of fair and impartial investigation, and of sound, moderate, and rational plans of amelioration; that, no longer actuated by that *esprit de corps* which leads men to feel as a personal offence any exposure of the general evils of their system, or of the misconduct of individual members of their body, they should rather be solicitous to bring both to light, and to found upon their detection the remedial provisions which circumstances may be found to require; that, no longer satisfied with vague professions of a desire to promote improvement, or with the barren generalities of such addresses as have been from time to time presented to the Crown on the subject, they should, in their individual and collective capacity, aim at, and be satisfied with nothing short of, substantial and efficient enactments for securing the comfort, domestic happiness, moral and religious progress, and ultimate emancipation of their dependants; and, finally, that their fixed purpose should now be, not by plausible but unproductive resolutions to avert the interference of Parliament, but to render that interference unnecessary, by the frank, cheerful, and zealous adoption and pursuit of well-concocted and comprehensive schemes of economical, civil, and religious reformation.

We hail with sincere delight an example of this magnanimous determination in one West-Indian proprietor—we mean Sir George Rose—who, having formed a just estimate of his obligations as a planter, at least in one most important particular, has not scrupled both to carry into effect his own convictions on the subject, and openly and earnestly to press them upon the consciences of other planters. A pamphlet which has recently made its appearance under his name, “On the Means and Importance of converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity,” is eminently deserving of universal attention, but has peculiar claims on the consideration of every West-Indian proprietor.

D.

"It is only by looking fairly at the difficulty that we can judge the right which we have to charge the Colonial Legislatures with being culpably slow in the progress which they have made." (p. 51.)

We freely admit that the progress has usually been slow by which a whole people have been raised from barbarism to civilization, or from a state of slavery to the enjoyment of liberty. But the great cause of this has been, that the Government, as well as the superior classes, have been, in their degree, as barbarous and uncivilized as the mass of the people. In the dark ages to which Mr. Ellis refers, all classes were sunk in one common abyss of barbarism. There are, therefore, no points of resemblance between the state of Europe at that time and the situation of the colonies of Great Britain at the present moment, on which to found any fair analogy. The governors were then altogether indisposed, and to the full as incapable as the governed, to promote the progress either of civil freedom or religious light. In the present day, at least in this country, the governors are in widely different circumstances. Living in the full blaze of light themselves, they have the means of reflecting the rays of that light on their dependants. Enjoying and appreciating themselves the blessings of freedom, they fully admit also the right which every British subject possesses to protection from injury, and to a participation in their own civil and religious advantages. What, then, has hitherto withheld them from imparting these blessings to the Negro population in our Colonies? It will be said in reply, that the Slaves were so unprepared for liberty, that to have given it to them would have tended to their injury and not to their benefit. Be it so. But, still, was it necessary that they should be chattels; that they should continue to be bought and sold; that they should have no rights of property, no marriage, no Sabbath, no moral

APPENDIX D.

, no education; that they should remain in the class of animals; that they should, like them, be driven by the lash, ereft of all motive for exertion but the base and servile of bodily fear? Slow indeed must have been their progress a such a state of things was prolonged. But has any g been done, has any thing even been attempted, with a view quicken it? In truth, the very first efficient step towards provement is yet to be made. There is, even at this moment, marriage tie among 800,000 British subjects. Not only is ot marriage required or enforced; it is absolutely discouraged. Nay, when a sense of Christian obligation has led the Slaves, under the influence of Methodist or Moravian Missionaries, to form a permanent connection of the domestic kind, the union has no sanction from law; it may be violated with impunity by the parties themselves, it may be dissolved at the will of the master.

Will it be argued that it was impossible to take even this first step towards civilization; or that there was something so peculiarly and incorrigibly vicious in the Negro character, that the very attempt to institute marriage was utterly hopeless? Something of this kind we know has been alleged. And yet, on this supposition, how will the following facts be explained?

In every other country in the universe, however barbarous and uncivilized, the institution of marriage exists, and its obligations are understood and respected.—Marriage has always existed, and its obligations have been enforced, among the Slaves of the Spaniards and Portuguese; and the happiest effects have resulted from it.—Even in the English colonies, where Slaves are not allowed to be *legally* united in wedlock, the Methodist and Moravian Missionaries have succeeded in inducing many of their converts to form lasting unions; and in inducing them also, though those unions are unsanctioned by law, to fulfil the duties which belong to the married state.—Thousands, removed from Jamaica to Sierra Leone, and who have with them to that place the same vices of polygamy and promiscuous concubinage which then prevailed, and which laws which prohibited polygamy and promiscuous concubage, were at once wrought upon to subvert and which rendered marriage indissoluble.—The Africans liberated from the holds of captured

and settled at Sierra Leone, have submitted likewise without difficulty to the same salutary discipline : marriage is universal among them, and its rights and obligations are as well recognized and observed as in England itself.—Nay, even in pagan Africa, though polygamy exists, the marriage contract is held sacred, and is guarded by the most formidable sanctions.—Among the Slaves in the West Indies alone, of the whole human race, the marriage state is yet to be instituted !!

The progress of civilization and of freedom, it is alleged, must necessarily be slow in order to be safe. Certainly we are not anxious to precipitate matters so as to endanger the public safety. But what will be said, by those who look to the middle ages for the analogies which are to defend the slow progress of West-Indian improvement, to that more apposite exemplification of what may be safely and beneficially effected for the advancement of the Negro race, which is furnished by the colony of Sierra Leone ? There, 15,000 individuals have been rapidly raised from the lowest conceivable state of degradation and wretchedness,—from the chains and nakedness and brutality, the filth and ordure and stench, of a slave-ship,—to the state of men, of free citizens, of voluntary agents, living by their own exertions, and as fully protected by law in their rights of person and property as the inhabitants of Great Britain itself. Are not these the very men of whom West-Indian Slaves are made ?—And let it not be said that Christianity had previously prepared them for this elevation. Christianity has, indeed, done much for them. It has shewn in them a signal instance of its civilizing and humanizing and moralizing energy. But, be it remembered, they were freemen before they were Christians. The rulers of that colony did not wait the tardy and dubious progress of certain preparatory measures, before they struck off their chains and bade them be free ; before they told them that they had rights, and also that they had obligations, as British subjects ; that the former no man could violate with impunity, and that the latter they were bound to fulfil. It was by their own free and unfettered choice that they afterwards embraced Christianity. Many of them, indeed, have not yet embraced it. Nevertheless, not an instance can be adduced of danger having arisen from this rapid transition from slavery to freedom.

Now the Slaves in the West Indies are either more or less advanced towards civilization than the wretched beings thus drawn from the holds of slave-ships. If they are more advanced, then why the comparatively slow progress in civilization and freedom, which they are fated to make on the western side of the Atlantic? If less advanced, what does this prove, but the baleful influence of our whole system of colonial bondage? The *old* argument of the advocates of the Slave Trade was, that the middle passage was but a happy transition from a savage to a civilized state of existence; from insecurity and barbarism, and the darkest superstition in Africa, to protection and civilization and Christian light in the West Indies. But what does the fact, according to the *present* argument, turn out to be? The very reverse of the former allegation. It represents the Africans, in addition to all their other wrongs, so much more brutified than they were, before they became the subjects of a Christian government in the West Indies, as to be unfit for the same privileges which their brethren enjoy, and incapable of the same rapid improvement which they undergo, in their native land.

The progress, say the West Indians, is necessarily slow from barbarism to civilization.—If this be so, it surely is the worst plea in the world for perpetuating institutions directly tending to barbarize, or for imposing barbarism needlessly and gratuitously on any individual. Even if, for the sake of argument, we should allow it to be a valid reason for leaving the existing race of slaves, until death come to their relief, in the state of barbarism which our cruel institutions have entailed upon them, still it can be no reason for reducing more of them to the same state. It can be no reason for subjecting the yet unborn infant, when born, to the same deleterious process of first barbarizing and brutifying him by slavery, and then trying to train him and his posterity for a freedom to be given them at some undefined period, when they shall be pronounced fit for it. Surely the more rational and Christian-like plan would be, to begin to fit them to be the free subjects of a free state from their very birth. Surely it would be quite as easy to rear the Negro to be an industrious and useful citizen in Jamaica, as it is at Sierra Leone. Why, then, this preposterous reference to the middle ages, in order to supply a plausible pretext

resting ourselves of the solemn obligations we are under by infant born within the British Colonies, to educate him member of a free and Christian community?

Here, then, any thing necessarily slow—necessarily slower, to say, than the ordinary progress of education, and the of the individual from infancy to man or womanhood the process by which the whole population of the West may be as effectually redeemed from barbarism and ism, and made partakers of civilization and Christian as their African brethren have been at Sierra Leone?

It is argued, that if the Negroes were emancipated, as in that climate their wants could be supplied, they revert to their former modes of savage life; they would in their habits of peaceful industry, and resort to plunder violence for subsistence; and they would renounce Christ for their former superstitions. Without stopping to the misapplication of terms in this argument—such as o labour extracted by the lash, the designation of *habits of industry*; or the attributing to the Slaves in general and or degree of Christian knowledge—we would remark, first place, that the argument not quite fairly assumes that propose of Mr. Buxton's motion was *immediate* emanci-

although he was at pains to disclaim it. It further s, with as little ground, that the work of emancipa-ould be unattended with all that train of ameliorating vilizing and Christianizing measures which were laid by him and by Mr. Wilberforce as the necessary and neous concomitants of every step which should be taken s emancipation. But, to give every advantage to the nt, let us suppose the emancipation to be as sudden as been thought right to assume that it is intended to be; ven in this case, looking at fact and experience, may we nticipate would be the consequence? The very reverse, rehend, of the honourable Gentleman's anticipations. We ere again revert to the case of Sierra Leone. The wants 15,000 savages introduced into that colony, and put sud- a possession of their liberty, were at least as few as the of the Slaves in the West Indies can be supposed to be. awn from the suffocating hold of a slave-ship; naked as at rth, excepting their chains and fetters; accustomed only anty portion of rice and water daily, would regard as

luxuries even the hut and food and clothing of the West-Indian Slave. Africa, too, is to the full as productive as Jamaica, and rewards with equal abundance the toil of the labourer. But has the conduct of these emancipated Slaves, though thus unfavourably situated, according to Mr. Ellis's hypothesis, given any countenance to his fears? On the contrary, they have *voluntarily* preferred to their native forests the abodes of civilized life, though they knew that they must purchase its enjoyments with the sweat of their brow. Instead of resuming their former habits, they have been daily advancing in the habits of peaceful industry and of civil subordination; they have not had recourse to plunder and violence, but to regular labour, for their subsistence; and the majority of them have renounced, and the rest are gradually renouncing, their African superstitions, for the pure and self-denying doctrines of Christianity. Why should we assume that the case would be different in the West Indies?

Again, let us consider the example of Guadaloupe. In 1793 liberty was proclaimed universally to the Slaves in that island. Their conduct, during their ten years of freedom, was in all points the very reverse of what it is apprehended that of the Slaves of Jamaica would be, under similar, or rather more favourable, circumstances; seeing that the soil of Guadaloupe is more fertile, and that the metropolitan state was then unable to controul any insurrectionary movement. And yet their governors bore testimony to their regular industry, and uninterrupted submission to the laws, down to the very period when the peace of Amiens enabled Bonaparte to reintroduce the whip among them.

St. Domingo is an example still more strongly in point. Notwithstanding the atrocities, and the years of sanguinary conflict, not only with the French but with each other, which marked the revolution in that island, and the universal desolation which these occasioned; we find, after a lapse of thirty years, that the Haytians have not reverted to the habits of savages, but, on the contrary, that they are improving in the arts of civilized life; we find them protected by equal laws, engaged in the pursuits of peaceful industry, adhering to the profession at least of Christianity, and competently discharging every duty attaching to them as citizens and members of a well-regulated community.

But while we adduce these instances, in order to diminish the unreasonable alarms which some people have been led to indulge at the very mention of emancipation, we repeat, that the emancipation which is now in question is not a sudden or immediate, but a gradual and progressive emancipation.

Mr. Ellis supposes the case of the British Parliament legislating in favour of the Slaves, and the Colonial Assemblies resisting the benevolent intentions of Parliament. But this is a case which, as it would imply absolute insanity on the part of the latter, can hardly be admitted as of the slightest weight in the discussion. If Parliament do but act, the Colonists can have no choice but that of submission.

He also refers to the danger arising from the overpowering numbers and physical force of the Slave population in the West Indies, as compared with the White population. In Jamaica it may be about fifteen to one. But in Sierra Leone, where the proportion of the Blacks to the Whites is one hundred and fifty to one, no danger has been experienced, nor has any apprehension of danger been felt: and why? Because the Blacks are free, and are protected by equal laws; they have "an equal participation in all the civil rights which are enjoyed by British subjects under our free constitution."

E.

Improvements in the Slave Law of Jamaica.

MR. ELLIS admits that he was disappointed in the result of the Address to the Crown which he moved in 1797. He maintains, at the same time, that to reproach the West Indians with having done nothing effectual, is unfair; and he specifies certain improvements which have taken place in the legislation of Jamaica, as proof of this unfairness. Let us consider them with attention.

An Act was passed, he tells us, by the Assembly of Jamaica, in 1797, with a view of promoting the religious instruction of the Negroes.—Why this Act should not have been produced by

the local authorities, when they were called upon to produce all acts of this description, is not very obvious. On the 12th of July 1815, a motion was made in the House of Commons for all such laws as had been enacted in any of the Colonies relative to the protection and good government of Slaves since the year 1788. A return was made from Jamaica of fifteen acts, which had been passed between that period and the end of 1814. These were all printed at full length, by an order of the House of Commons dated the 5th of April 1816; but the act referred to by Mr. Ellis is not to be found among them, and we are therefore denied any opportunity of forming a judgment respecting it. The probability indeed is, that it must have been repealed, though the fact is unknown to Mr. Ellis; for had it existed in 1815, the local authorities would scarcely have passed it over in absolute silence, while they were affording us the means of judging of the general progress of improvement in the *Code Noir* of Jamaica between the years 1788 and 1815. Of the fifteen acts, produced in illustration of this improvement, there is only one which can be considered as coming under the description of a meliorating act, and that is the Consolidated Slave Law of December 1809, subsequently superseded by that of December 1816. The other acts, as far as they respect the Slaves, which some of them do not in the remotest degree, are the very reverse of meliorating: they are intended to operate as restraints, and not as relaxations. In one of them, of the date of 28th November 1807, there is the following clause: "And whereas in and by certain of the acts, and clauses of acts, herein and hereby repealed, provision was made for making slaves assets for payment of debts and legacies, and in what manner they should descend and be held as property, and be conveyed in certain cases; and *it is expedient* to continue and amend such *wholesome* regulations; Be it therefore enacted, by the authority aforesaid, That *no slave shall be free by becoming a Christian*; and, for payment of debts and legacies, all slaves shall be deemed and taken *as all other goods and chattels* are in the hands of executors and administrators; and where other goods or chattels are not sufficient to satisfy the said debts and legacies, then so many slaves as are necessary for the payment of debts and legacies shall be sold."

Mr. Ellis says, that in 1816 a Committee of the House of Assembly recommended the prohibition of the sale of slaves under writs of *venditioni exponas*, and they have credit given to them for the humanity of this report. The credit, however, in this case, as in many others, has been cheaply purchased. The recommendation has not been attended to. The act of 1807 is still unrepealed, because, doubtless, notwithstanding this recommendation, it was deemed more *expedient* to continue its *wholesome* provisions. Mr. Ellis says, that if the legal difficulties in the way of the repeal of the writ of *venditioni exponas* could be overcome, no objection to its repeal would be made on the part of the West Indians. But whatever those difficulties are, as they apply to existing contracts, and they are not very palpable, we cannot imagine what obstacles there can be in the way of reversing the act of 1807 as it respects the future, and enacting that henceforward slaves shall no longer be deemed and taken to be as other goods and chattels.

But we come to the year 1816. In that year the Curates' Act was passed. Mr. Ellis denies that this act has been inoperative; and yet, in a report of the House of Assembly during the session of 1822, it was stated to have been almost wholly inoperative. To precisely the same effect is the testimony of Mr. Cooper, as given in the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery." "As for this Curates' Act," he observes, "I have heard it repeatedly declared, that it was intended for England, not for Jamaica." "It must have been known before it was passed, that the planters would not allow their slaves any opportunity for attending on their new instructors; and that, consequently, such a law could have no tendency to improve their condition." "Mr. Cooper was informed by the Curate of Hanover, that he might apply to ten estates before he got leave to preach on one." "And both the Rector and Curate told him that they were of no use to the slaves as instructors; and that, under existing circumstances, it was impossible they should."—(Negro Slavery, p. 43, 46.)

Testimony equally decisive, and to which West Indians may less object, is given in a work which has just made its appearance, entitled "A View of the past and present State of the Island of Jamaica, by J. Stewart, late of Jamaica," printed for

Whitaker. The author, who quitted Jamaica only in 1821, is certainly no adherent of the Anti-Slavery party; on the contrary, he evidently leans to the side of the Colonists, although we must do him the justice to say he seems to aim at being impartial. His account of the Curates' Act is as follows.—

“Curates were appointed a few years ago by an act of the legislature. Their salary is 500*l.* currency, but they have no other emolument from their curacies. The ostensible object of their appointment was, that they should preach to and instruct the slaves in the Christian religion; *an object which, from whatever cause, has been rendered in a great measure abortive.* Either the curates are lukewarm in the cause; or the planters do not wish the time and attention of their slaves to be occupied by religious discussions; or, which is most probable, both of these causes have operated to render the intentions of the legislature nugatory. As it is, the curates have dwindled into mere assistants to the rectors, who were before their appointment fully able to perform all their clerical duties. By a law of some standing in the island, the rectors are required to set apart two hours every Sunday to the religious instruction of the slaves; but *this law is very little attended to.* The truth is, that, however willing the rectors might be to perform this duty, very few of the slaves have it in their power to attend church; they are either in attendance on their owners, or their time is occupied in a necessary attention to their own affairs; *for Sunday is not a day of rest and relaxation to the plantation slave; he must work on that day, or starve.*” p. 167.

“A writer in one of the public prints of Jamaica, in 1820, complained that ‘the curates had done nothing in the way of their calling,’—‘neglecting to do that which is expressly required of them by the legislature, viz. visiting the plantations at stated times, for the purpose of baptizing and instructing the slaves in the Christian faith; provided, however, it is with the consent of their owners.’ In reply to this charge, another writer (supposed to be a clergyman), says, ‘Has he’ (the former writer) ‘allowed the curate of his parish an opportunity of discharging the functions of his office towards his Negro servants, agreeably to the tenor of the act on which he lays so much stress? If not, he has no reason to complain of neglect. If he has, HE IS ALMOST A SOLITARY INSTANCE;

as, to my knowledge, some curates have applied to many proprietors, trustees, and managers, expressing not only their willingness, but their desire, to be called upon to discharge the duties of their office, in the instruction of the ignorant slaves, BUT IN NO SINGLE INSTANCE HAVE THEIR SERVICES BEEN ACCEPTED; and surely it cannot be expected that any man, who has a proper regard for himself, would intrude on the property of another, though for the most praiseworthy purposes, with the apprehension in view of being turned off it.'

"The allegation thus publicly brought forward by this apologist, has not been satisfactorily replied to, and we must therefore conclude that there is a general disinclination on the part of the planters to have their slaves instructed in Christianity. There are, it is true, some enlightened men, who have different ideas and feelings on this important subject; but their number is too small to be productive of any good beyond the boundary lines of their respective properties." p. 292.

The author subjoins a note, to say, that since he quitted the island, in 1821, "it appears that in a few of the parishes the work of instruction has made some progress." But this differs from the Report of the Committee of the House of Assembly of November 1822, already mentioned.

Having thus disposed of the Curates' Act and of the benefits which it has conferred on the Slave population, there remains only the last edition of the Consolidated Slave Law, namely, that of December 1816, on which to rest the boast of legislative improvement with respect to the condition of the Slaves in Jamaica. Now, we willingly admit that this law does improve in some respects on that of 1809; we shall proceed to shew in what particulars it does so.

The *second* section is entirely new. It enacts, "That all owners, managers, &c. shall, as much as in them lies, endeavour the instruction of their slaves in the Christian religion, whereby to facilitate their conversion; and shall do their utmost endeavours to fit them for baptism, and, as soon as conveniently can be, cause to be baptized all such as they can make sensible of a duty to God and the Christian faith, which ceremony the clergymen of the respective parishes are to perform when required."—There is here no allusion to

any former Act of the same kind ; no recognition of that law of 1797 mentioned by Mr. Ellis.

But is not the clause obviously intended to operate on the minds of the people of this country, and not on those of the people of Jamaica ? With respect to them, it is, and necessarily must be, wholly inoperative. So undeniably is this the case, that its provisions are not enforced by any penalty. Indeed, to *require* owners, overseers, &c. to teach the slaves their "duty to God," and "the Christian faith," has something in it, in the present moral state of society there, which is perfectly ludicrous.

To illustrate this, we need only turn to the testimony of Mr. Cooper, Dr. Williamson, &c. as given in the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery." Mr. Ellis, indeed, seems to admit that these different statements are not overcharged. It may not, however, be unseasonable to strengthen them by the corroborative testimony of Mr. Stewart, already referred to. "Even if slavery and its attendant abuses did not exist here," he observes, "no great improvement in the state of society could be expected, while the most gross and open licentiousness continues, as at present, to prevail among all ranks of the Whites. The males, of course, are here exclusively meant."—*"Every unmarried white man, and of every class, has his black or his brown mistress, with whom he lives openly : and of so little consequence is this thought, that his White female friends and relations think it no breach of decorum to visit his house, partake of his hospitality, fondle his children, and converse with his house-keeper."*—"But the most striking proof of the low estimate of moral and religious obligation here, is the fact that the man who lives in open adultery—that is, who keeps his brown or black mistress, in the very face of his wife and family and of the community—has generally as much outward respect shewn him, and is as much countenanced, visited, and received into company, especially if he be a man of some influence and weight in the community, as if he had been guilty of no breach of decency or dereliction of moral duty. This profligacy is, however, less common than it was formerly."—"If a gentleman pays his addresses to a lady, it is not thought necessary, as a homage to her delicacy, to get rid, *a priori* of his illicit establishment, nor is the lady so unreasonable as to

expect such a sacrifice. The brown lady remains in the house till within a few days of the marriage, and, if she is of an accommodating disposition, even assists in making preparations for the reception of the bride." p. 170.

If this statement be correct, what shall we say to the enactment which gravely commits to such characters as these "the instruction of the slaves in the Christian religion," with a view to their conversion?

The third section of the Act of 1816 is also new. The entire clause is this: "And be it enacted, that, from and after the passing of this Act, no shop shall be kept open during Divine Service."—This we presume means to apply to Sunday, though Sunday be not even named in the clause. But here again there is no penalty to enforce obedience. And does it not seem here also, as if the framers of the law contemplated its effect on uninformed minds in England, rather than its effect in Jamaica? For, while it enacts that no shop shall be kept open during the time of Divine Service, it leaves untouched the public Sunday markets, which take place in the open air, and during the very time of Divine Service; and which make it absolutely impossible for shopkeepers to obey the law, even if there were any penalty for disobeying it. Neither does it prohibit labour, not even compulsory labour, on the Sunday. It does not in any way recognize the sacred character of that day.

In the fourth section of the Act of 1816 there is added, to the corresponding section of the former Act of 1809 (which assigned to the slaves Sundays, and a day in every fortnight out of crop, to cultivate their provision grounds), a proviso, "that the number of days so allowed to the slaves for the cultivation of their grounds shall be at least twenty-six in the year."—This is certainly a considerable improvement: it adds ten days to the scanty time previously allowed to the slaves for this purpose. But still it does not amount to one-third of the time which is allowed to Spanish and Portuguese slaves, exclusive of Sundays, for the cultivation of their grounds. The number of days so allowed to them is eighty-two, while in Jamaica it is only twenty-six, even by this new and improved code; previous to which the number was only from fourteen to sixteen. And what is the penalty for violating this law? Twenty

pounds currency, equal to 14*l.* sterling. And this is not made payable for each day of the twenty-six which may be withheld from the slaves; so that if the whole twenty-six should be withheld, the penalty would still be only 14*l.* sterling; and that sum even two or three days' labour of the ordinary gang of an estate would abundantly repay to the owner.

It is also enacted, for the first time, by the law of 1816, section 11, that, *When there is a natural increase of slaves on any plantation during the year, 3*l.* currency is to be allowed for every slave born during that year and living at the end of it, to be divided between the mother, midwife, and nurse.*—This is, doubtless, some approximation to improvement. As, however, the decrease in the whole population of Jamaica is considerable, amounting to 5027 in the three years from 1817 to 1820, the premiums given for births cannot prove very onerous to the public. It may be worth while, however, to obtain a return of the payments made under this clause since it was passed.—[*While perusing the proof-sheet, we learn that this section has been repealed.*]

Into the Act of 1816 there is also introduced a new section (the 28th), which enacts, that in case any Justice of the Peace shall receive a complaint from any slave, that any slave has been *improperly punished, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this Act*, he *may* associate with him another magistrate, to inquire in a summary manner into the complaint; and if the complaint proves true, the magistrates are required to proceed against the offenders according to law.—Thus far all sounds well; although it must be kept in mind, that, by a preceding section, if the number of lashes inflicted on a slave (as to the degree of severity with which they may be inflicted the law is silent), do not exceed thirty-nine, nothing has been done that is *improper, or contrary to the true intent and meaning of the Act*. But at the end of the section comes a *proviso* of a most extraordinary description: “But, if it shall appear that such complaint was groundless, the said magistrates SHALL PUNISH the complainant, and the person giving information thereof, IN SUCH MANNER AS TO THEM MAY SEEM PROPER.” The magistrate *may* inquire into the complaint, but he *shall* punish the complainant, if his complaint shall prove groundless! And this is the last edition, with

amendments, of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica ! What chance, we confidently ask, is there, that complaints will be preferred, by slaves, to magistrates (who are almost universally themselves slave-owners), when, in case they fail in proving their complaint to be well grounded, they are liable to be punished ; and not merely liable to be punished, but the magistrates *shall* punish them, *in such manner as to them may seem proper* ? This is what is called in the West Indies *protecting Slaves* !

Mr. Stewart, the author already referred to, who witnessed the operation of this Act for no less than four or five years after its enactment, makes the following observation upon it. " If oppressed and ill-treated, the slave may indeed lay his complaints before a magistrate, who, of course, is bound to listen to, and, if possible, redress them ; and if he be a good man, he will actively endeavour to do so. But he cannot *legally* render justice to the slave by the punishment of the master, should the latter *decline* giving evidence against himself—a very natural proceeding, where no other admissible evidence exists. The evidence of the slave, and of his fellow-slaves, is insufficient to convict him. The magistrate then can only admonish the master ; and the slave is sent home, perhaps to suffer renewed severities for his audacity in preferring a complaint against his master." p. 224.

Mr. Stewart has entirely overlooked the farther duty which the law imposes on the magistrate, of punishing the groundless complainer.

In the sections 41 to 45, are contained the regulations alluded to by Mr. Ellis, to secure the freedom of slaves manumitted by will, and those for prohibiting the purchase of slaves by middle-men. The former in no way alter the law as to manumissions, but merely obviate a difficulty of form. The latter furnish a striking instance of the general spirit of colonial legislation. By the provisions of this law, persons travelling about the country for the purpose of trafficking in slaves, are to be taken up, and carried, with the slaves, before two justices of the peace. The purchases or sales effected by them are declared null and void ; and the slaves—what becomes of them ? They are to be set free, without doubt. No ! this would be too liberal a course, though it is the course

pursued by British Acts of Parliament in the case of all illicit trading in slaves. The law of Jamaica directs, that the two justices " shall declare the same (viz. the slaves) to be forfeited, and proceed to sell the said slave or slaves" by public sale ; half of the proceeds to be given to the informer, and the other half to the church-wardens. A question may fairly be raised, whether this regulation be not a direct contravention of the Slave-Trade Abolition Acts, which ordain that all persons *illegally* dealt with as slaves shall be forfeited to his Majesty, not for the purpose of being *sold* into slavery, but *for the purpose of being made free, and having their persons protected against all claim.*

The 50th section is also new, at least it is not to be found in the previous Act of 1809. Whether it be an improvement will be better estimated when it shall have been read : it is as follows :—" And whereas it has been found that the practice of ignorant, superstitious, or designing slaves, of attempting to *instruct* others, has been attended with the most pernicious consequences, and even with the loss of life ; Be it enacted, That any slave or slaves found *guilty* of preaching and teaching, as Anabaptists or *otherwise*, without a permission from their owner and the quarter-sessions for the parish in which such preaching and teaching takes place, *shall be punished in such manner as any two magistrates may deem proper, by flagellation, or imprisonment in the workhouse to hard labour.*" The next section goes on to forbid, and to punish with similar severity, all " nightly and other private meetings."

It is surely not too much to say that this persecuting enactment is worthy of the Inquisition. Sir George Rose tells us of the thousands of slaves who have been converted to Christianity by means of the Methodists. If one of these, actuated by a desire to do good to his next-door neighbour, or to his children, shall endeavour to instruct them in the truths he has himself learnt to value as of supreme importance, he may, by the terms of this law, if he have not a licence from both his master and the quarter-sessions, be cart-whipped, imprisoned, and kept to hard labour in the workhouse, at the discretion of any two magistrates ;—" in such manner as any two magistrates may deem proper ! " Then, observe the convenient vagueness of the terms, " nightly and other private meetings."

The night in Jamaica comprehends, on the average, from ten to twelve hours of the twenty-four. Even a meeting for family worship would come under this comprehensive description.

The sections 70 and 71 have been added, according to Mr. Ellis, to provide "protection for any Negro detained in any jail or workhouse, alleging themselves to be free."—Some improvement, we freely admit it, is effected by this tardy enactment; but it still leaves in all its original iniquity that principle of colonial law which makes the colour of a man's skin *prima facie* evidence of his being a slave. An opportunity, it is true, is afforded him to prove his freedom; and this is, without doubt, a valuable concession; but if he cannot prove it to the satisfaction of a special sessions, he is left to the operation of the workhouse law, which ordains him to be sold as a slave for the public benefit. Thus, though no man claims him as a slave; though no man proves him to be a slave; though he himself affirms that he is free; though he may have been born perhaps in England, or in South America, or in Africa, or in the United States; though he may have come to Jamaica as a seaman and been left there; yet, if he has no proof of his freedom to produce (and in a thousand supposable cases he could have no such proof), this unoffending individual, against whom no crime is proved, or even alleged, is doomed to the severest of human inflictions by the workhouse law of Jamaica—he is to be sold into hopeless and interminable bondage!!

Such are the boasted *improvements* in the Jamaica Slave Code of 1816. But let us look a little more closely at the code itself. We shall omit to notice the various clauses which are merely inefficient, as imposing no adequate penalties, or as containing no executory principle; and shall confine ourselves, in addition to those already noticed, to such as seem to be objectionable in themselves.

The 20th section limits the hours of *field labour* to from five in the morning to seven at night, allowing intervals of half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner. Now, if we compute the time required for going to the field and returning from it at the moderate rate of half an hour on the average, we have here twelve solid hours of labour, in a tropical climate, exacted from the slave *by law, by a law pretending to humanity*.

Human nature was never intended to support such lengthened toil under a vertical sun. It would of itself account for the decrease of population in Jamaica.

The 24th section enacts, that "if any person shall hereafter *wantonly, willingly, or blood-mindedly* kill, or cause to be killed, any slave," he shall suffer death. It only wants the additional clause of the Barbadoes law, "*without provocation*," to make it a complete nullity. Is, then, the nature of murder (killing of malice *prepnse*) not sufficiently understood by the judges and jurors of Jamaica, or is there a danger that they would be too rigorous in their construction of the law, that the qualifications *wantonly, willingly, blood-mindedly*, are so studiously transferred from the indictment to the statute? "*By the instigation of the Devil*" should have been added. We shall see that there are no such qualifying terms when the law speaks of murder committed by a slave.

By the 25th section, persons mutilating, dismembering, or wantonly and cruelly whipping, maltreating, beating, bruising, wounding, or imprisoning without sufficient support, any slave, are punishable by a fine not *exceeding* 100*l.* currency, or 7*l.* sterling, or imprisonment not *exceeding* twelve months; and in *atrocious* cases the slave may be set free.

By the 27th section, the lashes inflicted at one time, for one offence, in the absence of the owner or overseer, are not to exceed ten; and when inflicted by order of the owner or overseer, are not to exceed thirty-nine lashes in the same day, or until the sufferer has recovered from his former punishment; under a penalty of from ten to twenty pounds currency. Punishments, therefore, not exceeding this measure, cannot even be questioned: the law excludes them from its cognisance.

By the sections 39 and 40, the suffering a slave to possess a horse or mule, is punishable by a fine of 30*l.* currency, and the animal is to be forfeited.

In the 46th section which assigns its punishment to murder when committed by slaves, there are no such qualifying descriptions of the crime, as we noticed above, in the section which punishes murder when committed by freemen on the persons of slaves. The words of the 46th section are, that "if any slave or slaves" "shall commit any murder," "such slave or slaves" "shall suffer death," &c.

By section 47, slaves assaulting, or offering any violence, "by striking or otherwise, to or towards any white people, or persons of free condition," except by their owners' command, shall be punished with *death, transportation*, or such other punishment as the court in their discretion shall think proper to inflict.—This is indeed a most tremendous enactment, and framed with a most tremendous laxity of expression.

By section 48, slaves having in their custody or possession any fire-arms, pikes, sabres, swords, cutlasses, lances, gun-powder, slugs, or ball, without the knowledge of their owner or overseer, may be punished with *death*, or such other punishment as the court may think proper.

Section 49 is to the following effect: "In order to prevent the many mischiefs that may hereafter arise from the wicked art of Negroes going under the appellation of Obeah Men or Women, and pretending to have communication with the Devil and other evil spirits, whereby the weak and superstitious are deluded into a belief of their having full power to exempt them, whilst under their protection, from many evils that might otherwise happen; Be it enacted, That any slave who shall pretend to any supernatural power in order to excite rebellion or other evil purposes, or shall use or pretend to use any such practices with intent or so as to affect or endanger the life or health of any other slave, shall suffer *death* or transportation." Let the reader observe here the extraordinary discrepancy of the preamble with the enacting clause. Whereas there are slaves who pretend to a power to *exempt other slaves from evil*, therefore, if they shall pretend to any supernatural power—not to exempt others from evil, but—to inflict evil upon them, they shall suffer death, &c. And let it not be supposed that this barbarous law is dead and inoperative, as too many of the protecting laws are. No; it is in constant and fearful operation. We trust that a return will be required of all persons executed in Jamaica and the other islands under such enactments.

By sections 52 and 53, it is made capital to mix or prepare certain substances used in Obeah, or even to have them in possession; and among them are enumerated pounded glass, parrots' beaks, dogs' teeth, alligators' teeth, &c.

By section 58, any slave who shall fraudulently have in his custody or possession, unknown to his owner or overseer, and without being able to give a satisfactory account of it, any quantity, *under* twenty pounds weight, of any fresh beef, veal, mutton, pork, or goat, or of the flesh of horse, mule, or ass, shall be whipped not exceeding thirty-nine lashes; and if the quantity is *above* twenty pounds weight, then he shall suffer such punishment, short of death or imprisonment for life, as two justices shall think proper to inflict.—Here, be it observed, the legislature of Jamaica, not content with thus constituting a new and unheard-of offence, throws the *onus probandi* on the accused. But, independently of this, what a state of comfort and happiness and luxurious enjoyment must that be, when even the custody or possession of a single pound of fresh meat is made a crime in a slave, from which he must exculpate himself by satisfactory evidence, under the penalty of thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip!!

By sections 74, 75, 76, and 77, slaves *going off, or attempting to go off, the island* (that is, trying to regain their liberty), *or aiding others to go off, are liable to suffer death*, or such other punishment as the court may direct. Free People of Colour aiding them are to be transported, and if they return, sold; and White persons aiding them are to forfeit 300*l.* for each slave, and to be subjected to a year's imprisonment.

By section 78, any slave travelling, without a ticket from his owner, with dogs, or cutlasses, or other offensive weapons, may suffer any punishment short of death and transportation.

In the 79th section, among the other crimes for which slaves may be tried capitally, is enumerated that of "*compassing or imagining the death of any White person or persons.*"

In the same section is a clause which enacts that in all cases, including the case of all capital crimes, "the evidence of slaves *against* one another shall be received." Now when it is considered, that in all matters in which White persons or free People of any Colour are concerned, the evidence of slaves is rejected in the Jamaica courts, and rejected *on the specific ground that it is undeserving of credit*, it is indeed a most extraordinary inconsistency, and manifests a most remarkable indifference to the life of a slave, that it should be made to depend on such testimony—on testimony which is deemed

wholly unworthy of being admitted to decide the meanest question, whether civil or criminal, which affects a free person. To reject it in the latter case, while it is admitted in the former, can be reconciled with no one principle of law or justice.

By the 89th, 90th, and 91st sections, slaves sentenced to be executed or transported are to be appraised, and their value paid to their owners.

Such are some of the provisions of this last and best edition of the Jamaica code. They will speak with sufficient distinctness to the feelings of every British bosom to render comment superfluous. And yet the Jamaica code is confessedly superior to that of most of the other colonies.

To conclude this long note: Mr. Ellis denies that the West-Indian meliorating acts, as they are called, are almost entirely a dead letter. The examination of this question would necessarily lead to too great length of detail. We shall therefore only refer him, and all who entertain any doubts on this point, to a work now in the press, and shortly to appear, from the pen of Mr. Stephen, containing a delineation of the law of Slavery as it exists in the British Colonies.

F.

Baptism and Marriage.

MR. ELLIS appeals to his personal observation while in Jamaica in 1805; in favour of the liberal and humane treatment of the slaves:—he “does not doubt,” he “understands,” that considerable improvement has since taken place. That the treatment of *his own* slaves was liberal and humane we do not doubt, especially during his actual presence; but that such has been the *general* treatment in the island, his hesitating language shews that he has no adequate means of knowing or of proving. He can speak only from report.

But things, we are told, are now greatly improved; and the evidence adduced of that improvement consists partly in the increase of baptisms and marriages among the slaves. (p. 54.)

With respect to baptism, we perfectly agree with Sir George Rose, that we ought to put it entirely out of our calculation, where it has not been attended by Christian instruction, and by the amendment of the neophyte. On the largest and best of his estates in Jamaica, Sir George Rose informs us, that he found that the slave population, although they had been baptized, were “*UTTERLY without religion, ignorant, disorderly, and dishonest.*” (See his pamphlet, pp. 4 and 9.) This view of the matter is completely borne out by the clerical authorities he has quoted from the Parliamentary papers of 10th June 1818, and which merit particular attention. The Rev. W. Chaderton, of Antigua, declares it to be utterly impossible for the regular clergy to attend to the spiritual wants of the slaves.—The Rev. G. F. Maynard conceives that it would be degrading his functions, and incurring the guilt of misleading the poor ignorant slaves, were he to baptize them, knowing that there was not the remotest prospect of their being better instructed in their duty.—The Rev. Joseph Hutchins, also of Barbadoes, says, that *nothing* can be done successfully for promoting religion among the slaves, without the general concurrence, approbation, authority, and co-operation of their owners.—The Rev. W. Nash, of Grenada, remarks, that the reply of the slaves to him was, that if they come to church they must starve, Sunday being their only day to cultivate their grounds; and he adds, “the plea is so reasonable that I cannot oppose it, but I heartily wish their masters would deprive them of it, by allowing them a day in each week to labour for themselves.”—The Rev. B. Webster, of Grenada, observes, that besides this, Sunday is the general market-day; and the markets being held during Divine Service, of course the slaves shew no regard to religious duties.—The Rev. H. Jenkins, of St. James’s, Jamaica, alludes to the fruitlessness of any efforts in the way of instruction which he can render to the slaves; and yet in this parish, in 1816, 1,123 slaves were baptized.—The Rev. T. P. Williams, of Clarendon, intimates, that, with 18,000 souls in his parish, he has little time for the instruction of slaves. He had twice, however, made known to all the proprietors in his parish, within the preceding thirteen months, his readiness to attend on their estates to instruct the slaves, but he had not been able to obtain the consent of more than two of them.

At the same time, he remarks, that he hoped he had done some good.—The Rev. John West, of St. Thomas in the East, Jamaica, inquires how he can possibly instruct 20,000 slaves, and intimates that the work is yet to be begun.—The Rev. Alexander Campbell, of St. Andrew's, in the same island, had begun to assemble and instruct the slaves, but before he had proceeded far with this plan, "he found that it was regarded by some as an innovation of questionable utility, and he thought it wiser to defer the prosecution of it." In this parish, nevertheless, about 2,000 slaves were baptized in 1815, 1816, and 1817.—The Rev. J. H. Walwys, of Nevis, represents it as an utterly hopeless attempt in the clergy to instruct the Negroes under present circumstances.

Still more in point is the testimony of the Rev. T. Cooper, as given in "Negro Slavery." In the parish of Hanover, in Jamaica, where he resided, 5,773 slaves had been baptized from 1814 to the 28th June 1817, yet in that parish there was no catechizing of the Negroes. Both the rector and curate said they were of no use to the slaves, and Mr. Cooper thought it impossible they should. "I have been present," he adds, "more than once, at the christening of two or three hundred of them, and repeatedly conversed with them. Need I say, that the whole is a solemn mockery? No effort is made to prepare them for the ceremony or to enforce its design."

But, independently of these direct and unimpeachable testimonies to the painful degradation of Christianity, and of its institutions, which is involved in the wholesale baptisms boasted of in Jamaica, is it not plain, on other grounds, that they are intended not for the spiritual benefit of the slave, but for popular effect in England? They have water sprinkled on them, in some cases, by hundreds at a time, and have Christian names given them; but do they thus become Christians? The local authorities tell us so. But does the conduct of those authorities shew that they think so? These Christians, so called, are denied the Christian Sabbath: they are denied also the marriage tie: they are permitted, nay, they are almost forced, by the policy or neglect of the very men who are eager to swell the list of baptisms, to live in a state of fornication and promiscuous concubinage. Is not this to play the farce of Christianity? What must these baptized heathens think of

the religious principles and feelings, we will not say of their masters, but even of their pastors, who gravely performed this sacred initiatory rite, requiring, in its very terms, of all adults at least, and in the case of children of their sponsors, a knowledge of Christian truth, repentance, faith in the Gospel, and obedience to the Divine commands? What, we say, must they think of these clergymen, who, while they professed to admit them into the holy church of Christ, knew that they were living at the very time, and that they would continue to live, in the regular disregard of every religious institution, and in the open profanation of the Sabbath; and that they were wallowing, and would continue to wallow, in the very mire of impurity?

But it will be said, that this is an exaggerated picture, as marriage has increased among the slaves in Jamaica. Returns have been made to the House of Commons, by which it would appear that in the last fourteen years 3,596 legal marriages had been celebrated between slaves in that island. Sir G. Rose assumes this statement to be correct. "It appears," he observes, "after all that has been justly said of that colony, it may be called a temple of Hymen, when compared with our other West-Indian settlements,"—in all of which put together not a dozen legal marriages of slaves appear to have been celebrated in the same long period.

Now, the first thing to be observed in this return of marriages is, that, small as is their number (about 250 annually in a population of 340,000), they are almost wholly confined to parishes where the *Methodists* have formed establishments. Many of the other parishes, and among them some of those where wholesale baptisms have been most numerous (Hanover, for example), have not a single marriage of slaves to exhibit. The authorities, therefore, who furnished this return, ought to have told us how many of these 3,596 marriages were performed by the regular clergy; or whether the whole were Methodist marriages, and of course not legal or binding marriages. At the same time, we are not aware that the mere circumstance of the ceremony having been performed by a clergyman, would make that a legal and binding marriage which has no sanction in law, and no protection from it.

The authorities in the other islands are much more open and explicit in their statements. In Trinidad, the marriages of

slaves are said in thirteen years to have been three; in Nevis, Tortola, St. Christopher's, Demarara, Berbice, Tobago, Antigua, Montserrat, Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Grenada, and Dominica (with the exception of sixty marriages stated to have been celebrated in the Roman Catholic church) the return is absolutely none!! Now as in some of these islands, and especially in Tortola, St. Christopher's, St. Vincent's, Antigua, &c. the Methodists have obtained a large number of converts; and as they require of their converts to abstain from polygamy and promiscuous concubinage, and to enter into a solemn engagement to live together as man and wife; if such engagements could have been regarded as *legal* marriages, we should have had the list of such marriages, instead of being returned *nil*, boasting a much larger proportion than even Jamaica itself.

The clergymen of Grenada are very candid on this point.—“The legal solemnization of marriage between slaves in this island,” says the Rev. Mr. Nash, “is a thing unheard-of, (unheard of!); and if I might presume to offer my sentiments, would, in their present state of imperfect civilization, lead to no beneficial result.” We should be glad to know from Mr. Nash, in what part of the world, however rude and uncivilized, except in the West Indies, marriage does not prevail, and produce beneficial results. Can he point out any results which could flow from it which are half so bad as those which attend the present system of brutified concubinage? He thinks he can; for he goes on, in a strain of disgusting sentimentalism (disgusting, when so employed), to give us his reasons for so extraordinary an opinion from the pen of a Christian minister. “Their affection for each other,” he says, “if affection it can be called, is capricious and short-lived: *restraint would hasten its extinction; and unity without harmony is mutual torment!*” These absurd and ludicrous reasons would be equally valid for getting rid of the marriage-tie in England as in the West Indies.

To the other two clergymen of Grenada, Mr. Macmahon and Mr. Webster, NO APPLICATION had ever been made to marry slaves. Neither Mr. Macmahon, during his ministry of thirty-seven years in English colonies, nor Mr. Webster, during his incumbency of twelve years, had *ever heard of such a thing*. In the opinion of the latter, “the slaves appear to prefer a state

of concubinage, from which they disengage themselves at will." Doubtless, many even among ourselves would be of the same mind, if the laws would allow them to indulge their natural propensities.

The clergymen of Antigua write in a similar strain. The Rev. Mr. Coull states, that for forty-three years, during which he had been rector of St. George's, no one had ever applied to him to marry slaves but in one instance, and with that application he did not comply. He states incidentally, that there is a penalty of 50*l.* for marrying a free person to a slave. This law should be called for.—Mr. Harman, the rector of St. John and St. Paul, observes, that there is not any such occurrence as the marriage of slaves on record in either parish, such marriage "having been invariably considered as *illegal*." "Nor is it easy," he adds, "to conceive how so solemn and binding a contract can possibly be entered into by persons who are not free agents." Mr. Harman seems not to have been aware that the villeins in England married, and were protected in their connubial rights; and that the Negro slaves in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, and the slaves in Malabar—in short, in all parts of the world, with the exception of the West Indies—enjoy the same privileges.

The Rev. W. T. Austen, a minister of the Church of England officiating in Demarara, states that the marriages of slaves is a thing unheard-of in that colony; and "I humbly conceive" (he says) "this holy institution to be altogether incompatible with the state of slavery, under existing laws and regulations." If Mr. Austen be right, not a day should be lost in reforming that state, and abolishing all laws and regulations which are incompatible with marriage. Mr. Elliott, a missionary in the same colony, observes, that he has united many slaves, with a view to promote morality, economy, and domestic happiness—yet the marriages solemnized by him are *not legal*. A similar answer is returned by Mr. Davies, another missionary; and by Mr. Browne, a Presbyterian minister in Demarara.

In the Bahamas, they tell us that the marriages of slaves are solemnized by the Methodist missionaries, *after their manner of formally enjoining them to abide by one woman*; but they make no return of legal marriages between slaves.

After this general survey of the state of the other West-Indian

colonies in respect to marriage, we again return to Jamaica, and ask, whether there is not the utmost reason to believe that the account received thence, and laid on the table of the House of Commons, as "a return of the number of marriages *legally* solemnized between slaves since the 1st of January 1808," is made up, in great part at least, of marriages that were *not legal*, in the usual meaning of that term. We think it incumbent on Parliament to put this point beyond all doubt, by requiring from the Rectors of the different parishes in Jamaica, *certified returns from the parochial registries of all marriages LEGALLY solemnized* in that island since the year 1808; together with a copy of the law by which the 3,593 marriages, which have taken place there, have been rendered *legal* marriages, as asserted in the return already received. It cannot be that the authorities of Jamaica should have condescended to shelter themselves from obloquy under the wing of the despised and slandered and persecuted Methodists, whose very chapel at Kingston was indicted in 1790 as a nuisance; whose missionaries in 1807 were made liable to a fine of 20*l.* for every slave proved to have been in their houses, chapels, or conventicles, for the purpose of attending their instructions; and even to public floggings, hard labour in the workhouse, and imprisonment in the common gaol (which last punishment three of them actually endured), merely for attempting the instruction of the slaves. "The persecution in Jamaica in 1807, obliged us," says Mr. Gilgras, "to put away 500 innocent slaves from our society; for we were liable to a fine of 20*l.* for each Negro we instructed, and they to punishment for attending. The chapels and meeting-houses were shut, while I and my wife were in the common gaol of Kingston; and when I came out, and began preaching on the restricted plan, I was obliged to appoint six door-keepers to prevent the slaves from entering the chapel and violating the law. They would, however, come in their leisure time, and stand outside. They would not, to use their own words, 'make Massa again to go to gaol: me no go in chapel, but me hear at door and window.' We beheld them, and wept, but could say nothing."

See, for much valuable and authentic information on this and kindred subjects, "Watson's Defence of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies," published in 1817, for Blanchard, City Road.

G.

" I do not believe, however confidently it may have been asserted, that the whip is used as a stimulant to labour : " it is rather " a badge of authority than an instrument of coercion." (p. 56.)

NOTHING in the whole course of the debate surprised us more than this statement of Mr. Ellis. It proves most incontestably the gross deception which is practised upon absent proprietors, and the consequent ignorance in which they are kept of the real nature of colonial bondage. If the whip be not the stimulant to labour in Jamaica, what is? No man, who knows any thing of human nature, will believe that the Negroes will labour day after day, and from day-break till night-fall, in a tropical climate, where, according to the report of the Jamaica Assembly of 1816, the labour of twelve or thirteen days in the year will abundantly supply all their wants, without *some* stimulant. Is it from pure love to their masters that they submit to perpetual and uncompensated toil? Or what is their motive? Men do not usually toil for others without a motive to stimulate them. In this country the stimulant is wages: what is it on Mr. Ellis's Jamaica estate? What was it when he himself was upon the spot? Does he really mean gravely to assert that the Negroes in Jamaica are not driven to their work by the whip? We, on the contrary, are perfectly ready to produce proof that the whip *is* the stimulant, almost the only stimulant, to labour in Jamaica. The cart-whip—its presence, its dread, its actual infliction—we maintain, and (we repeat it) are perfectly ready to prove, is the grand and governing motive to exertion among the slaves in that island.

Hear what Dr. Williamson, a prophet of their own, says on this point. He lived fourteen years in Jamaica. He was there at the very time that Mr. Ellis was there. Though no planter, he is as solicitous as Mr. Ellis himself can be, to paint the West-Indian system in favourable colours—yet hear what he says.

" Opinions have been given, that it would be well to do away the possession of a large heavy whip from the driver's hands ;

and, whether we consider the frightful sound which reaches our ears every minute in passing through estates by the crack of the lash, or the power with which drivers are provided to exercise punishment, it would be desirable that such a weapon of arbitrary and unjust authority were taken from them. It is at present customary to crack the whip to turn out the gangs at stated hours to the field. When a Negro seems to be tardy at his work, the driver sounds the lash near him, or lets him feel it, as he thinks proper." From all this the "impression made upon the passenger, who is probably a stranger," (residents of course are used to it), "is horrible indeed." Vol. ii. p. 222.

Another witness cited in "Negro Slavery" (p. 67), says, that in 1822 "the slaves on the estate were constantly attended by drivers with cart or cattle whips, which they were in the habit of using as here carmen use their whips on horses."

The Rev. Mr. Cooper states, in the same work (p. 47, &c.) "The gangs always work before the whip, which is a very weighty and powerful instrument. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women, without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. Mr. Cooper does not say that he is always using the whip; but it is known to be always present, and ready to be applied to the back or shoulders of any who flag at their work or lag behind in the line."

Mr. Stewart, in his recent work on Jamaica, confirms this representation in an incidental, but not the less satisfactory, manner. Speaking of the severe disappointment which a young man who goes out to Jamaica, full of bright anticipations, encounters on actually entering on the field of his future labours, he observes, "a very brief experience dispels the illusion, and shews him the fallacy of his hopes. He finds himself placed in a line of life where, to his first conception, every thing wears the appearance of barbarity and slavish oppression. He sees the slaves assembled in gangs in the fields, and *kept to their work by the terror of whips borne by black drivers*, certainly not the most gentle of human kind," &c. p. 102. "Formerly, when slaves could be easily replaced, much oppression and a great waste of life was occasioned by what was called the *pushing* system, that is, extracting from the soil as much as possible *by an over-working* of the slaves;" and even

now "the chief ambition of too many is rather who shall make the largest crops, &c. than who shall govern the slaves placed under their care with the greatest moderation and humanity." They do not weigh "in their minds the impolicy and inhumanity of purchasing a few additional bogsheads of sugar at the expense and comfort of the slaves." pp. 186, 188.

Another work has just made its appearance, published by Longman, and entitled "The Jamaica Planter's Guide, by Thomas Roughley, nearly twenty years a sugar-planter in Jamaica," from which we shall extract a single passage bearing on this point. "The most important personage in the slave population of an estate is the head driver. He is seen carrying with him the emblems of his rank and dignity," viz. a staff and whip. "A bad or indifferent head driver sets almost every thing at variance, injures the Negroes, and the culture of the land. He is like a cruel blast, that pervades every thing and spares nothing. But when he is well-disposed, intelligent, clever, and active, he is the life and soul of an estate." The author proceeds to give directions for the proper choice of a driver, observing, with a ludicrous gravity, "I may err, but hope not irretrievably." He then describes him: "He should, in my judgment, be an *athletic* man," &c. p. 81.

It will be observed, that we do not here refer either to the Privy Council Report, or to the House of Commons Evidence, or to Dr. Pinckard, or to various other sources of information, which establish, in the clearest and most irrefragable manner, the existence of the driving system in former years; though, unless it can be shewn that some adequate substitute has since been found for it, these testimonies are equally conclusive as to the present practice. We have contented ourselves with adducing written evidence of a very recent date, to which we shall be ready to add much oral testimony, should it be required of us to do so. In the mean time we shall only remark, that when a West-Indian proprietor has brought himself to believe that the whip is no longer used as the stimulant to labour in the West Indies, he seems to have reached the *ne plus ultra* of delusion.

H.

MR. ELLIS says, that "*the West Indians will agree to abolish Sunday markets, and to give the Negroes equivalent time to work in their grounds, provided the means are afforded of employing the Sunday in religious instruction.*" (p. 55.)

IT is not very obvious why the abolition of Sunday markets, and the giving to the slaves a day in which to cultivate their grounds in lieu of Sunday, should be made to depend on any contingency whatever. It is a thing right in itself, that the profane and disgraceful custom of making Sunday the market-day should be abolished. It surely is no less unquestionably right in itself, that the Sunday should be given up to the slaves, even if it were only for the purpose of repose from labour on one day in seven; to say nothing of the higher uses of the Sabbath. Doubtless one of the causes of the non-increase of the slave population is the want of a day of rest; and while in this way the systematic desecration of the Sabbath has tended to the injury of the masters' interests, by wasting the strength and ruining the health and abridging the lives of the slaves, it has operated also, in the mean time, to a proportionate augmentation of the quantity of produce thrown into the market, and to a consequent depression of its price. The West Indians are thus suffering most severely from their contempt and profanation of this sacred institution. Even supposing the Sunday, or a part of it, to continue to be voluntarily employed by the slave in cultivating his own grounds, he would obviously be a great gainer by the arrangement; for he would so much the sooner be enabled to acquire the means of purchasing his freedom, or that of his wife and children. There can exist no valid reason for delaying one hour to abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday, and to give to the slaves equivalent time for the culture of their grounds on other days. The Portuguese and Spanish slaves have 134 days in the year, including Sundays, for this purpose, viz. fifty-two Sundays, thirty holidays, and a day in each week besides; while in our

islands the time given them, exclusive of Sundays, is only from fourteen to sixteen, with the exception of Jamaica, into whose last slave code a provision has recently been introduced which requires that the time allowed them should amount to twenty-six days in the year.

The restrictive condition introduced by Mr. Ellis in this place, as that on which Sunday is to be given to the Negroes, and equivalent time to be allowed them for their provision grounds, seems to us inconsistent with the representation he has made in other parts of his speech, of the anxiety felt by the Jamaica Assembly to promote the religious instruction of the slaves, and of the degree in which the doctrines and truths of Christianity have been already inculcated upon them. Surely the twenty-one Rectors, with their twenty-one Curates, aided by the whole body of "owners, proprietors, possessors, managers, and overseers," put into requisition by the second section of the Slave Law of 1816, for the purpose of instructing the "slaves in the principles of the Christian Religion, whereby to facilitate their conversion," if there were any efficient object in all this legislation, might be considered as affording sufficient "means of employing the Sunday, when given up to the Negroes, in religious instruction," to induce the West Indians forthwith to "agree" to "the abolition of Sunday markets" and compulsory Sunday labour, and to "the affording equivalent time to the Negroes to work on their own account." The delay in doing so is inexplicable, if the second section of the law of 1816 was meant to be operative, and if Rectors or Curates are to have an opportunity of performing the functions assigned to them.

It is said, that to put an end to Sunday labour, &c. till means of instruction are provided, would produce tumult and disorder: just as if the plantation and colonial police were not amply sufficient to repress these; and as if Sunday markets tended to promote sobriety. Give them but the spring of hope,—the prospect of freedom by their own exertions,—and whatever part of the Sunday the weariness of nature or the opportunity of religious instruction does not engross, will be, in general, devoted to far other purposes than tumult and disorder.

I.

"Where does the responsibility attach for the bad state of morals in the West Indies?" (p. 57.)

UNQUESTIONABLY it attaches to the West-Indian proprietors. Were they not aware of the prevailing demoralization? was Mr. Ellis not aware of it? He was himself on the spot. If they were not, then what pretence can they have to demand credit for that accuracy of local knowledge to which, in every stage of this controversy, they have made such overwhelming pretensions? If they were aware of it, then it behoves them to explain why they did not attempt to apply a remedy to the disorder; or, if this proved to be beyond their power, why they did not apply to Parliament for its aid. The almost universal prevalence of a state of immorality and licentiousness unparalleled in any other part of the world, is now admitted: and what is the defence? The defence is, that this state has existed so long that it cannot now be easily or speedily eradicated! In other words, the West-Indian authorities have long been supine and inactive. Under their eyes, nay, under their very controul, the condition of social life has become so lamentably vicious and corrupt, that a long time is now required to abate the nuisance. It surely is their fault, that a cure should not have been attempted at least, not to say effected, long ago. It was, at least, always in their power to have done, what the Abolitionists have been uniformly urging them to do for the last thirty years:—it was at least in their power to have instituted marriage among the slaves, and to have legalized and protected that institution: it was in their power to have abolished Sunday markets and Sunday labour: it was in their power to have given encouragement, as Sir G. Rose, Mr. Barham, and a few others have done, to the teachers of Christianity: it was in their power to have inhibited, in their own agents, that licentiousness, and those grossnesses of conduct, which, operating with all the influence of example, have given so fatal a blow to the interests of morality in the West Indies. In this respect, generally speaking, they have done nothing. The work of

moral reform is still to be commenced ; and yet they wish to escape from the responsibility which attaches to so persevering a dereliction of their clearest and most unquestionable obligations.

Here, however, it is obvious to remark, that if such be the admitted state of demoralization in the West Indies ; if there be truth in Mr. Stewart's delineation of that state, as it will be found above at p. 162 ; if the clear reiterated testimony of Dr. Williamson on this point be not a malignant fabrication ; if the other living witnesses, adduced in the pamphlet entitled " Negro Slavery," have not exposed themselves to conviction and infamy as false accusers ; then must a state of moral feeling and moral conduct exist among the inhabitants of the West Indies unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Now, will it be wise, as has been proposed, to commit to such men, without reserve or interference, the present and eternal destinies, the temporal, moral, and spiritual interests of 350,000 of his Majesty's subjects ? What hope can we have, after such appalling delineations, that they will not abuse the most absolute and uncontroled dominion which the world ever witnessed ; or that they may continue to be safely entrusted, not only with the delicate task of legislating for their bondsmen, but with a power of summarily inflicting punishment upon them to a fearful extent, without being liable to any legal revision or responsibility whatever ?

K.

" The remedy (for the existing state of morals) is not to be found in the emancipation of the Negroes." (p. 57.)

No one has said that the *specific* remedy, for the profligacy prevailing among the slaves in the West Indies, is to be found in their emancipation. It is certainly, however, to be found, if at all, in that direct interference with the discretion of the local authorities, which shall render it impossible to perpetuate the present wretched and profligate system. It is to be found in the

admission among the slaves of Christian light; in the abridgement and effective controul of that arbitrary power which has been so much abused; in giving the Sabbath to the slaves; in instituting marriage among them, and absolutely interdicting separations of husband and wife; in educating their children to be the free members of a Christian community; in presenting to their minds a higher motive for exertion than the dread of the lash; in opening to them a prospect, by industry and frugality and good conduct, of acquiring the means of purchasing their freedom; and in employing moral and married agents to superintend them. All these measures co-operating together would soon change the moral aspect of society; the gross vices which now disfigure it would disappear, and slavery also would in no long time disappear with it.—“Freedom, if given to the Negroes before they are fitted to receive it,” it is said, “would only confirm and aggravate” the prevailing licentiousness. But surely not, if freedom is to be the reward, in the case of adults, of patient industry, forethought, frugality, self-denial; and if the infants are all to be Christianly educated, with a view to the enjoyment of their liberty. The very pretence for delay is thus taken away.

L.

“I not only have no objection to offer, but, with such limited means as I possess, I should feel bound to lend my humble support” “to the extinction of Slavery so to be accomplished.”
(p. 59.)

THAT is to say, To the mode of extinguishing slavery recommended in the Report of the African Institution published in 1815, entitled “Reasons for establishing a Registry of Slaves in the British Colonies,” Mr. Ellis has no objection to offer; on the contrary, he feels himself bound to lend it his humble support. This declaration cannot fail to be very gratifying to the authors of that calumniated Report. It will at the same time surprise those who recollect how that Report was received, on its first appearance, by the whole West-Indian body in England

of which Mr. Ellis is so respectable and influential a member; by all the local West-Indian authorities; and by almost every West-Indian planter from the Bahamas to Trinidad and Guiana. The loud and vehement indignation, the unappeasable resentment, the torrents of abuse and calumny, which that work called into action against its authors, must still be fresh in every one's memory. Even the attempt to abolish the Slave Trade did not produce half the clamour and violence which followed its publication, though it is now deemed, by no mean West-Indian authority, to be worthy of his high commendation. But where was the voice of the honourable Gentleman in 1816? He had then a full opportunity of expressing the manly and liberal sentiments which he has now avowed; and the expression of them would then have been of use in stemming the tide of passion and prejudice by which his friends were carried away. But such has been the fate of every measure of West-Indian reform which has hitherto been attempted. It has been opposed in its outset and progress, with a blind hostility, by the colonial body; but when the measure, in spite of that hostility, has at length been carried, then, though its promoters may continue to be reviled as before, the measure itself is sure to be lauded as wise and salutary. Thus has it been in respect to the abolition of the Slave Trade: thus has it been in respect to the Registry Bill: and thus, without doubt, will it soon be in respect to the reforms now in agitation. After the usual round of animosity and invective, of rumours of insurrection and massacre, and of anticipations of irremediable ruin, we shall have the hostilities and alarms of West Indians converted into expressions of unqualified satisfaction with the very measures which had provoked their resentment, and by which they have been benefited in spite of themselves.

Mr. Stewart, in unison with Mr. Ellis, observes, that "with respect to the general effects of the Slave Registry law, it is now found to be not merely harmless, but in some respects beneficial, not only to those whose advantage the proposers of it had mainly in view, but to the interests of the Whites individually and collectively." p. 240.

But, notwithstanding the praise which is now bestowed on the system of registry, by some of those who a few years ago loaded it and its authors with every expression of vituperation

which the English language could supply, let it not be supposed that that system has been brought into real living efficacy in our West-Indian islands. It exists there in little more than in name, so far as respects the main ends which were contemplated by it. Had the case been otherwise; had the principles recommended in the Report of the African Institution, and so highly eulogized by Mr. Ellis, been really acted upon by the West-Indian legislatures, there might have been less necessity than there now obviously is for the proposed interference with the state of colonial bondage. The Registry Acts passed by those legislatures fully verify the anticipation of that Report (p. 107), "that the work, if left to them, would not be done;" that the fruit of their labours "would be no better than ostensible and impotent laws;" and that "the system would be made perhaps a cover for those very frauds which it was designed to prevent." For the proof of this we refer to another Report of the same Institution, published in 1820, and entitled "A Review of the Colonial Registration Acts." We beg also to refer our readers, for a further elucidation of this important subject, to a speech of Mr. Stephen, delivered at the annual meeting of the African Institution on the 16th May, 1823, which, with other able and interesting speeches, will be found prefixed to the Seventeenth Report of that Society, lately published.

M.

*"Not one word from that most important of all the islands,"
Jamaica. (p. 61.)*

IN June 1821, a variety of papers, relative to the population of the West Indies, were moved for in the House of Commons. Nearly two years elapsed before any part of those papers were furnished. On the 4th of March, 1823, there were laid on the table of the House Returns from the Colonies of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, Barbadoes, Antigua, Tobago, Demarara, Berbice, St. Christopher's, Trinidad, and Mauritius. It was not till the 14th of May, the very day preceding the debate, that any returns appeared from Jamaica, Nevis, and the Bahamas. Several of these returns are extremely defective, especially those from Barbadoes and Jamaica; and there are

no returns at all from St. Lucia, Honduras, Bermuda, and the Cape of Good Hope. Several of the Jamaica returns are only from a small proportion of the twenty-one parishes into which the island is divided. The Governor, in transmitting them, observes, in a letter dated 17th March 1823, "I have been unwilling that any further delay should take place in furnishing these returns, even in their present imperfect state." A similar apology is made for a similar deficiency in the returns of the same island, in the Governor's letter of the 17th August 1816. Again, on the 28th January, 1813, the Governor acquaints the Secretary of State, that, "after having allowed abundant time for the returns, I do not feel myself authorized to delay any longer transmitting such as I have received, although in a very imperfect and defective shape,"—being returns from only ten parishes out of twenty-one. Again, in October 1804, the Secretary of State called for various returns from Jamaica, not one of which was ever sent. We mention these circumstances, among many others, to shew how uniformly difficult, if not impossible, it has proved to obtain full and satisfactory information of the state of the slave population in this island. As for the returns of population recently received thence, being only for six parishes out of twenty-one, they are obviously of no utility whatever.

N.

Observations on the Speech of Sir George Rose.

WE have already expressed the high sense we entertain of the manly and most meritorious conduct pursued by Sir George Rose. His speech on the present occasion, as well as his pamphlet "On converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity," do him the highest honour, and entitle him to the gratitude of every philanthropist. We apprehend, however, that Sir George Rose has been led into some mistakes respecting the amount of the fruits of the labours of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries among the slaves in the West Indies. The intrinsic value of those labours, it would be impossible for any one to estimate more highly than we do. We feel deeply grateful to them for the self-denying exertions and sacrifices which they have made, in the face of obloquy and persecution, and even

of bonds and imprisonment, for the eternal well-being of the most contemned and injured of the human race. If they had not succeeded in gaining a single convert, we should still have ranked them with the martyrs and confessors of old ; for, like them, they have been ready to risk even life, in the hope of benefiting the wretched and perishing Negro. Their success, however, has happily been considerable, and has been achieved in the face of obstacles of the most formidable and disheartening description ; and we look forward to effects still more signal from their future efforts. It is important, however, that their success, whatever it be, should be estimated soberly, and according to their own official returns, on which we place implicit reliance, rather than according to any more sanguine calculations which may be drawn from less authentic sources. We shall begin, therefore, with inserting, as the basis of our observations, the return of the state of their churches in the West Indies which was made to the Methodist Conference in July 1822, the latest return to which we have any access. It is as follows.

ANTIGUA DISTRICT.

	Whites.	Coloured & Black.	Total.
Antigua	40	4205	4245
St. Kitt's.....	42	2261	2303
St. Eustatius	8	219	227
Tortola	41	1959	2000
Nevis	27	1023	1050
St. Bartholomew's	11	314	325
St. Martin's	14	103	117
Anguilla	7	213	220
Dominica	9	433	442
Montserrat	2	33	35
Total	<u>201</u>	<u>10763</u>	<u>10964</u>

ST. VINCENT'S DISTRICT.

St. Vincent's	21	2880	2901
Grenada	9	319	328
Trinidad	4	115	119
Barbadoes	17	29	46
Tobago	1	48	49
Demarara	10	1312	1322
	<u>62</u>	<u>4712</u>	<u>4774</u>

JAMAICA DISTRICT.

	Whites.	Coloured & Black.	Total.
Kingston	15	3704	3719
Spanishtown	1	234	235
Morant Bay	9	3069	3078
Grateful Hill	3	441	444
Montego Bay	5	155	160
St. Ann's	—	40	40
	<u>33</u>	<u>7643</u>	<u>7676</u>
 Bahamas	 552	 508	 1123
Bermuda	<u>60</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>106</u>
Hayti	<u>—</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>56</u>

The total number of persons in the West Indies belonging to the Methodist connexion is thus made to amount to 889 Whites, and 23,819 Black and Coloured persons. But as from these ought to be deducted their converts in St. Eustatius, St. Bartholomew's, St. Martin's, and Hayti, (amounting to 33 Whites, and 692 Black and coloured persons), the correct return for the *British* colonies is 847 Whites, and 23,127 Black and Coloured persons.

Neither the statements of Sir George Rose, nor those of the Methodist Society, afford us any means of ascertaining what proportion of the Black and Coloured members consists of slaves, and what of free persons. Our own apprehension is, that the slaves do not amount to more than half of the whole number, that is to say, about 12,000 or 13,000 souls. We are persuaded we cannot have greatly erred in this estimate. We shall be glad, however, to have it corrected by authority.

Now, the terms of admission into the Wesleyan Methodist societies being very wide and comprehensive, we cannot but fear that Sir George Rose's estimate of the numbers substantially benefited by them is excessive. Into these societies, according to the principles established by Mr. Wesley himself, no one is refused admittance who professes "a real desire to save his soul," and who, after a brief probationary interval (we believe of a few months), appears to be sincere in that profession. It is not very probable, therefore, that many of those adults who feel the beneficial influence of the labours of the

Methodist Missionaries, would continue long without the pale of their connexion, especially as there is generally no other communion into which they can enter.

Then, as to the instruction bestowed on the young, it seems to be assumed that the schools established by the Methodists are schools in which the children of *slaves* attend, and learn to read at least, if not to write. If, however, we consult Mr. Roughley's work, p. 105, we shall find that the usual state of things on *plantations* is incompatible with such an idea. It there appears to be the customary practice, that the children, "after they pass five or six years, should be taken from the nurse in the Negro houses, and put under *the tuition of the driveress*, who has the conducting of the *weeding gang*."—"It is best," Mr. Roughley tells us, thus "to send them with those of their own age to *associate together in industrious habits*." "The supple hand of the Negro child is best calculated to extract the weeds and grass" from the canes; "and the addition of a *small hoe* draws the mold to their support." "An experienced Negro woman should be selected to superintend *this gang of pupils*, armed with a *pliant, SERVICEABLE twig*, more to create *dread* than inflict chastisement." "Each child should be provided with a light hoe," "a small knife, and small basket to carry dung," &c.—These recommendations of Mr. Roughley are evidently meant to be substituted for harsher modes of proceeding, such as having a whip, instead of a twig, in the hands of the driveress; but they all imply that the children work in the field from an early age. Now, such a system as this is evidently irreconcilable with the supposition of the attendance of slave children at school, during the week: and, in point of fact, we believe that slave children do not so attend, in Jamaica, for the purpose of learning to read. Here again we are without any precise *official* information. We have, however, the clear testimony of the Rev. Mr. Cooper, (*Negro Slavery*, p. 42), that the "slaves in Jamaica are scarcely ever taught to read." And a circumstance has recently come to our knowledge, which seems to be decisive of the question, at least as it respects Jamaica: it is this—

There has lately been formed in that island "a District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge." In the Postscript to the *Jamaica Gazette* of the 11th May 1822,

there is a report of the proceedings of its *second* quarterly meeting. At this (only its second) meeting, it transpired that already "erroneous impressions had gone abroad relative to the purposes of the undertaking, which, if not removed, were likely to impede its success." "This meeting, therefore, declared *explicitly, that the object of the Jamaica District Committee is to promote and facilitate the religious and moral improvement of the FREE POPULATION of the Colony,*" and also to counteract the influence of infidelity promulgated by young persons returned from education in Europe. And they resolved, "*That the religious instruction of the slave population, though regarded as an object of the highest importance, yet being already in the hands of the legislature, ENTERS NOT into the views of this association, except in so far as the improvement of that class may be confidently anticipated as the natural result of the increase of religious knowledge, good principles, and exemplary conduct in the casts above them.*"

But, if such be the avowed purpose of what may be presumed to be the best part of the White community of Jamaica; and if it be necessary for the members of a society composed, as this is, of the chief local authorities of the island, themselves slave-holders, to allay, by the open renunciation of any design to promote the education of slaves, the general alarm which their Prospectus had produced; can we believe that the suspected and distrusted Methodist Missionaries would be permitted to carry the education of the slaves beyond merely oral instruction? In point of fact, we are assured that they are not permitted to do so.

On all these points, however, it will be easy to ascertain the real facts of the case. In order to do so, returns should be obtained, specifying the number of persons in each island united in the Methodist societies, distinguishing them into Whites, Free Black and Coloured Persons, and Slaves; marking, too, the gradations of colour in the free; and with respect to the slaves, whether they are personal or plantation slaves. If the names of the owners and plantations were also given, it would add to the value of the information. Then, with respect to schools, it would be necessary to state of each, whether it was a Sunday or week-day school; by how many of each of the different classes mentioned above, it was attended; what each of these

classes was taught; whether they were merely catechized, or taught also to read; and what progress they were permitted to make in reading. It would be satisfactory to know how many *slaves*, whether children or adults, in each of the islands, have been so instructed as to be able to read intelligibly a chapter in the Bible (as for writing, it is wholly out of the question); and we shall be surprised to find that there are ten *plantation* slaves, in the whole island of Jamaica, who have acquired even this degree of education by the means of Methodist or any other tuition. It would also be well to ascertain how many of the plantation slaves, taught to read, are the children of the attorney, overseer, book-keeper, or other White servant of the estate; how many are Black, and how many Coloured: and also, in the case of their attending Sunday schools, how their provision-grounds are cultivated in the mean time. It is obvious, that, if children of five years of age can be made to work regularly under a driveress weeding canes, carrying out manure, &c. they may be made useful also by their parents in planting and weeding the yams and corn, the eddoes and cassada, which are to sustain them.

Under these circumstances, and with these impressions, Sir George Rose will no longer be surprised that we should have spoken with more reserve on this subject than his more sanguine estimate would seem to justify. We have been without information that is precise and tangible, and therefore we have expressed ourselves in general and cautious terms in speaking of the extent of good actually done among the slaves; but we shall be most happy to proclaim it aloud when we are furnished with the means of doing so.

We think it right to add, that, all things considered, the University of Cambridge do not appear to us to have erred greatly in declaring, that, among the slaves, "religious instruction was nearly precluded." They seem to be fortified in this statement by the Report of the Jamaica District Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, which we have quoted: and as for the praise-worthy exertions of the Methodists, and their gratifying success, so remarkably evinced in the case of Sir G. Rose's own estates, they only serve to render the surrounding supineness and darkness more visible and opprobrious.

We have certainly seen nothing, in any documents which we

have had an opportunity of consulting—and we have sought eagerly for authentic information on the subject from all quarters—to lead us to suppose that there are at this moment “100,000 slaves under Christian instruction” in the West Indies, or that the Methodists have access “to a third of the estates in Jamaica.” At the same time, we greatly rejoice to observe the degree in which they have succeeded in abating the deep-rooted prejudices which have been entertained against them.

O.

WE are sorry that we have not been able to procure a more accurate and detailed report of Mr. BRIGHT’s speech. The reporter’s sketch of it was sent to him, and returned without alteration, in the exact state in which it now appears. We were unwilling to alter it ourselves. The first part of it which requires any observation is

A Charge of Inaccuracy against Mr. Wilberforce.

The passage in Mr. Wilberforce’s “Appeal” on which Mr. Bright animadverts, is the following. “Can it be conceived possible, that, even since the mitigation of Slavery was recommended from the Throne, in consequence of addresses from Parliament, several of the Colonial Legislatures have for the first time imposed, and others have greatly augmented, the fines to be paid into their treasuries on the enfranchising of slaves, so that in some colonies they amount nearly to an entire prohibition?” p. 42.

This statement, Mr. Bright says, is proved “by the returns on the table” to be “without the shadow of a foundation.” (p. 70.)

The returns, however, to which Mr. Bright refers were laid on the table and ordered to be printed only on the 4th March 1823, some time after Mr. Wilberforce’s Appeal had been published, and they were not in the hands of members until the latter end of April. Of the changes, therefore, whatever they were, which were indicated by these returns, neither Mr. Wilberforce nor the author of “Negro Slavery,” whom this

charge also affects, had the means of knowing any thing, until their productions had already been widely circulated. The charge of inaccuracy therefore, as far as it depends on a knowledge of those returns, can in no degree apply to them. Let us, however, examine the facts of the case more closely, as they respect the different colonies.

1. BARBADOES.—On the 12th July 1815, the House of Commons called for all laws enacted in any of the colonies relative to “the protection or good government of slaves since the year 1788.” The returns to this motion were laid on the table and ordered to be printed on the 5th April 1816. Among them is an Act of the Barbadoes legislature, dated 12th May 1801, which, after reciting that the fine then payable on the manumission of a slave was 50*l.* currency, enacts that henceforward, instead of 50*l.*, there shall be paid for every female slave manumitted 300*l.*, and for every male 200*l.*; and the reason assigned for this augmentation is, that the annual allowance of 4*l.*, to which manumitted persons had hitherto been entitled for their maintenance, had become insufficient for that purpose; and that therefore the annuities should be increased to 18*l.* for each female, and 12*l.* for each male.

By the papers laid before the House on 4th March 1823, it appears that this law had been repealed on the 10th of August 1816, when the fine payable on manumissions was again limited to 50*l.*; notwithstanding which, Mr. Bright says that Mr. Wilberforce has unjustly charged the Barbadoes legislature with having *increased* the fines on manumission, when they had only reduced them to their former limit.

Was it not then true, as Mr. Wilberforce and the author of “Negro Slavery” maintained, that the Barbadoes legislature had greatly augmented the fines on manumissions subsequently to 1797, the period of Mr. Ellis’s Address; augmented them no less than four times in one case, and six times in the other? “Oh, but these fines were afterwards reduced!” True also; but that fact had been improperly concealed from the knowledge of Parliament, by those whose duty it was, in obedience to his Majesty’s command, to have communicated it, and from whom alone it could be known. We say *improperly concealed*; for on the 22d April 1818, Mr. Wilberforce himself moved for copies of all laws passed in any of the colonies since 1812,

respecting the Slaves and free Coloured population; and also of all laws passed in furtherance of Mr. Palmer's Address of the 19th June 1816, for promoting the improvement and happiness of the Negroes. To this order the only return made by Barbadoes is an Act dated 2d December 1817, entitled "An Act to repeal part of an Act intituled 'An Act for governing of Negroes,' and for building and regulating a new cage;"—a new cage, that is to say, for holding Negroes!

Now if Mr. Wilberforce was ignorant of what had passed in Barbadoes, whose was the fault; his, who had called for information, or the local authorities of Barbadoes, who, while they made a shew of granting it, did in fact withhold it? In all fairness, therefore, he could not be blamed for supposing the Act of 1801 to be still in full force.

But if we examine these recent returns, to the consideration of which we have been thus invited, we shall find much light thrown on the whole of this important subject. From them we learn that the number of manumissions which had taken place in Barbadoes, for about fourteen years prior to the 30th September 1821, was 1713; of whom about 1000 were manumitted previous to the reduction of the tax in August 1816, and about 700 afterwards. Of the former number, however, only 15 had paid the tax; the rest having obtained their freedom without any payment. Are we to attribute this immunity to the liberal policy or the generous forbearance of the Barbadian authorities? By no means. Mr. Huskisson, the secretary of the Island, gives a more just account of the matter. During the period from 1808 to 1816, he tells us, "only fifteen persons were manumitted *according to the colonial law*:" that is to say, only fifteen manumissions paid the enormous tax which the Act of 1801 had imposed upon them. "The remaining number," he goes on to say, "have been enfranchised by persons in England, who have there granted manumissions to slaves conveyed to them for that purpose; which manumissions, being proved before some Mayor, or other proper constituted authority, are sent here, and, on being recorded, are allowed to be valid. These last manumissions are effected at a very trifling expense." The main object of the Barbadoes legislature in imposing such heavy fines was doubtless to prevent the increase of the free Black and Coloured population—

sumise which is confirmed by the higher tax levied on females, through whom alone freedom could be propagated, than on males. But they overshot their mark. The exorbitancy of the impost naturally led to evasion; and the ingenuity of benevolence appears to have effectually triumphed over the unfeeling and sordid policy which thus aimed to restrain manumissions; so that their number was probably increased by the very means which were intended to produce a contrary result. It was doubtless, therefore, the complete failure of this measure of prohibition, which induced its repeal, and not any wish to facilitate manumissions. It was felt that the smaller tax would be more likely to be paid than the large one; as the former might not exceed the expense and trouble of procuring enfranchisement by a conveyance of the slave to a friend in England. Accordingly, while of about 1000, who were emancipated during the operation of the heavy fines, only 15 paid them; of about 700, who have been enfranchised since their repeal, 250 have paid the smaller fine. Out of 1713 cases of manumission, therefore, the Island tax has been paid only on 265: the remaining 1448 have entirely escaped it. And had not the means been found of evading the higher tax, and thus obliging the legislature to lower it, it is more than probable that not a twentieth part of the manumissions would have taken place which have actually been effected. The influence of high fines in obstructing manumissions will be conclusively shewn in the course of this note.

The reason alleged, however, for having imposed these exorbitant fines on manumission, is one of humanity. The fines, it is said, are turned into annuities for the maintenance of the manumitted persons. "The fines of 300*l.* and 200*l.*," Mr. Husbands tells us, "*entitled* the persons manumitted under them, the one to an annuity of 18*l.*, and the other to 12*l.*; and the fine of 50*l.* to an annuity of 4*l.* during their natural lives." It will be well to call for a return of the payments which have actually been made under this *title* since 1808, specifying the name, age, sex, and residence of the parties. It will be well also to ascertain, by a specific return, how many of the 1448 persons manumitted, since 1808, without the payment of any fine, and therefore, we presume, without any *title* to the annuity which the Act of 1801 intimates to be indispensable to

their maintenance, are now in want, and in the receipt, and to what amount, of public charity. And if it be true that enfranchised persons absolutely require these annuities for their support, what must be the distress and misery of their numerous progeny, *born* free, who have no such resource; the annuities lasting only during the natural lives of the enfranchised individuals? Besides, why should women require so much more for their maintenance than men? Again: it is somewhat remarkable, that it should have been all at once discovered that the increased price of the necessaries of life had been such as to require (for such is the statement in the Act of 1801) an increase of the annuity to four or five times its former amount. And had prices sunk again to their old standard in 1816? We shall probably learn this when the repealing statute shall have been produced: at present the whole subject is involved in mystery, from which nothing but clear and precise returns can free it. So much for Barbadoes.

2. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S.—By an Act of this island, dated 19th July 1802, and entitled “An Act for regulating the manumission of slaves,” and which is contained in the House of Commons papers printed 5th April 1816, it is provided, that no manumissions shall take place, in the case of slaves natives of the island, or resident in it for two years, but on the payment of a fine of 500*l.*; and in the case of slaves not natives or resident, but on the payment of 1000*l.*; unless an Act of the legislature shall have passed for that special purpose. Here again, therefore, Mr. Wilberforce's statement is correct. And though returns of all laws respecting Negroes have since been called for, from this as well as from all the other islands, no Act of the St. Christopher's legislature has yet been produced, which repeals or modifies the Manumission Act of 1802. In the population returns, however, printed by the House of Commons March 4, 1823, Mr. Garnet, the Registrar of Deeds, certifies, “that there has been no tax laid, or fine imposed or paid, in the island, for the time aforesaid,” (that is, from 1806 to 1821), “on the manumission of slaves; and that I am not aware of any existing law of the said island for that time requiring it.” Has, then, the law of 1802 been repealed? There certainly has been no notification to that effect. Or have the 663 manumissions, which have taken place in St. Christopher's since

1808, been obtained through the medium of legislative acts? And what has been the expense of those acts? And if the legislature has permitted these manumissions without the payment of any tax, it would indicate at least that they did not apprehend any evil effect in the way of public burdens to arise from them. It is also important to know how many applications for manumission had been refused by the legislature of St. Christopher's.

In the other Leeward Islands—namely Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, and Tortola—and also in the Bahamas and Trinidad, no taxes at any time have been imposed on manumissions. The liberal conduct of these colonies, however, renders the contrary course in other colonies only the more indefensible, while it invalidates the plea for their imposition, arising from a prudent care to protect the public from eventual burdens.

3. GRENADA.—In December 1797, about six months after Mr. Ellis had moved that address in the House of Commons to which Mr. Wilberforce alludes in the passage censured by Mr. Bright, the Grenada legislature imposed a tax of 100*l.* for each slave manumitted; this tax being necessary, among other reasons for the measure, “to discourage the too frequent and indiscriminate manumission of slaves.” Here again Mr. Wilberforce's statement is perfectly correct. But, then, it will be said, the tax has been repealed, and he ought to have known it. It was, however, impossible for him to have known it, no return having been made of its repeal, although Parliament had called for a return of all such laws, and the fact being now known only from an incidental notice of it in the returns which were printed subsequently to the publication of his pamphlet.

These returns, however, furnish a most important fact. During seven years, in which the tax was levied (namely, from 1808 to 1814 inclusive), the manumissions amounted only to 74, or about 10 in a year. During the succeeding seven years, in which no tax has been levied, the number of manumissions has amounted to 629, or about 90 in each year on the average. Can there be a stronger proof of the mischievous effects of such a tax?

The legislation of Grenada supplies us with another striking fact on this subject. When the fine of 100*l.* was first

imposed, in 1797, it was enacted, that every person manumitted should be entitled to receive 10*l.* a year for life. In the year 1806, however, though the tax of 100*l.* was continued, the clause giving the annuity of 10*l.* was expressly repealed, and that without the assignment of a single reason. The pretext usually advanced for imposing a tax at all was thus shewn to be groundless: the tax was continued, but it was expressly directed not to be applied to the support of the manumitted individual. Both these Acts may be seen in the Parliamentary papers printed 5th April 1816, pp. 74, 75.

4. ST. VINCENT'S.—This island has always been one of the most backward in making returns to Parliament; and the history of its legislation is therefore more defective than that of most of the other islands. A fine of 100*l.* on each manumission, which had been imposed by its legislature, was repealed, it seems, in September 1820, and was only notified to the House of Commons in March 1823, after Mr. Wilberforce had published his Appeal. When the tax was first imposed does not appear, but it is believed to have been in 1798, thus agreeing with Mr. Wilberforce's statement. The effect of this repeal appears to have been an immediate increase in the number of manumissions. The whole number, in about fourteen years prior to September 1821 was 430: the number in the first nine months of 1821 was 99. Prior to that time it proceeded at the rate of only 25 or 26 annually.

5. TOBAGO.—On the 19th October 1814, a tax of 100*l.* was imposed by the Tobago legislature on each manumission, no tax having been previously payable. This is an additional proof of the correctness of Mr. Wilberforce's statement. There is no notification of its repeal, although Mr. Bright assumes that it has been repealed. It is remarkable, that previous to the imposition of this tax the average number of manumissions annually was about thirty-six, 251 having been manumitted in seven years. After the tax was imposed, that number decreased very considerably. In 1815 the number was four; in 1816, three; in 1817, eight; in 1818, one; in 1819, six; and in 1820, four. In 1821, twenty had been manumitted in the first nine months, which leads to a suspicion that the tax may have been repealed, but nothing is stated to that effect.

6. DOMINICA.—Previous to 1810 the tax on manumissions

in this island was 160*l*. The exact date of its imposition does not appear, but it is believed to have been the same with that of Grenada. In June 1810, it was reduced to 16*l*. 10*s*. on native slaves, or slaves originally imported from Africa, and 33*l*. on others. Previous to 1810, under the operation of the heavier tax, manumission appears to have proceeded at the very slow rate of about seven annually: from the time of its being reduced, the manumissions have proceeded in a tenfold ratio; at the rate, that is to say, of about 75 annually; 819 having been enfranchised in eleven years. But it is not very obvious why even the tax of 16*l*. 10*s*. and 33*l*. should still be continued. The reason given by the legislature of Dominica for reducing the tax in 1810, was, not to encourage manumissions, but because the former Act "had been found inadequate to the purposes for which it was passed, and the provisions thereof have been evaded, *to the great detriment of the revenue of this island.*" We presume the persons in Dominica who wished to manumit their slaves, had discovered some equally effectual mode of evading this cruel tax with that which had been discovered in Barbadoes. The Dominica Act will be found in the papers of 5th April 1816.

7. BERMUDA.—In the same papers there is an Act of the Bermuda legislature, dated 9th August 1806 (also confirmatory of Mr. Wilberforce's statement), expressly to "prevent" "the rapid increase of free Negroes and free Persons of Colour;" the provisions of which are wantonly severe. No owner is permitted to enfranchise a slave of "forty years of age or under," except on condition of such slave's quitting the islands within three months; and if he should return to them, he shall be seized, and *sold* for the public advantage, and transported from the islands. For slaves above forty who are manumitted, a fine of 50*l*. is payable; and if this fine be not paid, a power is given to magistrates of seizing, selling, and shipping off the person so manumitted. The same cruel Act ordains, that no free Negro, or Person of Colour, shall be capable of acquiring or being seised of any real estate whatever, under penalty of the forfeiture of such estate; nor is he allowed to lease a house for a longer term than seven years. Can this Act have been allowed by the King?

8. In DEMARARA, a fine is payable on manumissions,

amounting to from 200 to 300 guilders. Its effect in restraining manumissions appears to be very considerable, as in that colony, containing about 80,000 slaves, the number of persons manumitted has not exceeded the average of thirty-five annually. Mr. Bright says that the tax has been reduced or abolished in Demarara: we know not on what authority he states this; we know of none.

9. In **BERBICK** the tax is still higher than in Demarara, being between 400 and 500 guilders, and the average of manumissions has only been about eleven annually.

10. In **JAMAICA**, it is true, there is now no tax paid on manumission; but a bond for 100*l.* is required, binding the party manumitting to the payment of that sum in case the manumitted slave should become burdensome to the public. This, though far better than a tax, is still a very inconvenient provision, and doubtless operates as a powerful restraint on manumissions. Would it not be much better to pass a general Act, which should make the property of the person who should be guilty of manumitting a slave *mala fide*, liable to indemnify the colony for any expense which might be occasioned by it.

There are no returns from St. Lucia, or the Cape of Good Hope.

From the above details, several important inferences may be drawn.—

1st. That Mr. Wilberforce was perfectly correct in saying, that since the period of Mr. Ellis's Address, in 1797, *several* of the colonial legislatures had for the first time imposed, or had greatly augmented, the fines on manumissions.

2d. That his failure in pointing out the variations which had subsequently taken place in the colonial laws on this subject, was entirely owing to the delinquency of the colonial authorities, in not furnishing the information which had been required of them by the Crown in consequence of addresses from Parliament. "The honourable Member for Bramber," says Mr. Bright, "seems not to have looked at the returns on the table." When the "Appeal" was published, those returns, though called for nearly two years before, had not yet been made.

3d. That fines on manumission, when enforced, are attended with most injurious effects in retarding the progress of enfranchisement.

4th. That no countervailing benefit can be shewn to arise from those fines which will compensate for so great and obvious an evil. If the contrary is asserted, let returns be obtained from all the islands, to shew not only that the persons manumitted have had the annuities, to which they are said to be entitled, regularly paid to them; but that, in the numerous instances where no fine has been exacted, and where, of course, no annuity is payable, the manumitted persons have become a burden to the public. That they have become burdensome we certainly do not believe.

P.

"I do impute a bad intention to the man who put this book together." "I put it to the House whether what is printed in this book, called 'Negro Slavery,' as a fair quotation, is so, or such as ought to be promulgated as the real sentiments of this respectable gentleman," meaning the Rev. Mr. Cooper. (p. 71.)

THIS is indeed a serious charge. Its refutation will be found in the juxta-position of the passages which are said to be at variance.

A writer in the "Monthly Repository," under the signature of "Euelpis," had expressed an opinion that the Negroes might be converted to Christianity, notwithstanding their present degraded condition. In replying to this writer, in the Monthly Repository, No. cciv. p. 752, Mr. Cooper makes the following observation.

"Euelpis has made a quotation from the 'Report of the Wesleyan Missions,' to shew that there is an estate in Antigua upon which 'the whip is not needful now,' and another where 'the sound of the whip is rarely heard.' This, sir, to a Jamaica man, is truly astonishing; and I can venture to assure 'Euelpis,' that if the Missionaries can perform such wonders, without creating in the minds of the Negroes the hope of freedom, they will, on going to Jamaica, meet with the most zealous support from the planters of that island, who, I am sure, would be glad to throw aside the whip if they saw they could do it with safety."

The pamphlet called "Negro Slavery" had been giving Mr. Cooper's oral testimony on the subject of the driving system to the following effect :

"The gangs always work before the whip, which is a very weighty and powerful instrument. The driver has it always in his hand, and drives the Negroes, men and women, without distinction, as he would drive horses or cattle in a team. Mr. Cooper does not say that he is always using the whip ; but it is known to be always present, and ready to be applied to any who flag at their work or lag behind in the line."—To this sentence is appended the following note : "In one of his printed letters, in which he is replying to an objection, Mr. Cooper incidentally, but very significantly, remarks, that to a Jamaica man it would be truly astonishing to learn that the whip was not needed, or that its sound was rarely heard."

We certainly cannot perceive the slightest discrepancy between the two statements ; and as for the concluding lines of the quotation from Mr. Cooper's letter, which state that the Jamaica planters would be glad to *throw aside the whip if they could*, and which Mr. Bright complains should have been omitted, they would only have given additional confirmation to the point which was alone at issue, *the existence of the driving system*.

There can be no more conclusive evidence of the absence of all discrepancy between Mr. Cooper's statement and that contained in "Negro Slavery," than this, that Mr. Cooper, previous to its publication, saw and approved, not only the particular passage which has given occasion to Mr. Bright's imputation of an evil intention, but every syllable which is there inserted under the sanction of his authority. This approbation he has again expressed, in the strongest and most unqualified terms, since he has heard what passed in the House of Commons. Indeed, the quotations from Mr. Cooper's letters might have been considerably enlarged, with great advantage to the author's object. For example : "To my mind," says Mr. C., "no attempt can be vainer than that to render Negro *slavery* compatible with human happiness." But we also forbear, and shall only refer Mr. Bright to the Monthly Repository, No. ccviii. p. 231, &c., for information which may be interesting to him, from the pen of the same individual whom he has justly denominated "this respectable gentleman."

Q.

"It is not fair that he (Dr. Williamson) should be put forward as a witness against the planters in the West Indies." (p. 71.)

IT seems to us the very perfection of fairness to try the West-Indian system by the testimony, not of its avowed enemies, but of its avowed and zealous friends; which is in fact what the author of "Negro Slavery" has done in citing Dr. Williamson. "The whole result of Dr. Williamson's opinions," says Mr. Bright, "is highly favourable to the colonists, and to their management of the Negroes." Now this is precisely what the author of "Negro Slavery" has stated of Dr. Williamson's testimony. "Whenever Dr. Williamson speaks in general terms, he seems at a loss to find words strong enough in which to eulogize the humanity and tenderness of West-Indian proprietors and overseers.—But...let us come to particulars—" &c. p. 56. The work, therefore, as Mr. Sykes observed, in his reply to Mr. Bright, "was quoted expressly as being the work of an adverse witness;" and on that account its reluctant testimony is surely the more valuable, whenever it can be adduced to establish important facts. We recommend, therefore, on this very ground, the evidence of Dr. Williamson to our readers, as furnishing a less exceptionable proof of the evils which he recognises, than the evidence of the avowed enemies of the system would be held to furnish.

R.

"In 1818, a law passed in Dominica making the evidence of Slaves admissible," and "I have every reason to believe a similar law will be introduced in every other West-India Island." (p. 74.)

THE following is an extract from an Act of the Dominica Legislature of 22d April 1818, relative to this important subject, and which, except as it indicates a slight leaning towards improvement, is a very unsatisfactory enactment indeed. We trust, however, that it marks the commencement of a new era in the history of West-Indian legislation, notwithstanding the singular restrictions which tend to frustrate its professed object.

"And whereas by the present existing law, although punishment by fine is denounced against any White person or free Person of Colour, who shall beat, wound, maim, or ill-treat the slave or slaves of any other person, or deprive such slave or slaves of his, her, or their property, yet, *as the evidence of such slave or slaves is inadmissible for his, her, or their conviction, by which such enactment has proved of little effect, as such offence may occur when no White or free Person of Colour is present, and the offender or offenders from hence, may escape with impunity;* Be it, and it is hereby, further enacted and ordained, by the authority aforesaid, That, from and after the publication of this Act, any White person or free Person of Colour, who shall beat, maim, wound, or ill treat any slave or slaves, the property of another person or persons, or deprive such slave or slaves of his, her, or their property, on complaint being made thereof by the owner or owners of such slave or slaves, or his, her, or their representative, to any justice of the peace, and the slave or slaves being produced, and *the marks of the blows or wounds being exhibited* before any of his Majesty's justices of the peace, such justice shall, and he is hereby empowered, authorized, and required, should he deem the complaint suffi-

ciently founded, to summon *the party so accused before him, and to examine him on oath*; and on his refusal to be examined, such contumacy shall be construed an admission of the fact; and thereupon to bind over such White or free Person of Colour, charged with such offence, to appear at the next ensuing court of grand sessions of the peace, then and there to answer the charge alleged against such White or free Person of Colour, the said justice having previously examined upon oath such slave or slaves (should he, she, or they have been baptized), and duly explained and enforced to them the nature and solemnity of an oath; which examination the justice shall return with the recognizance to the clerk of the crown, prior to the sitting of such court; and on the parties appearing before the court, the testimony of any slaves who may have been present (he, she, or they having been baptized) shall be received, as far as it shall appear clear and consistent in the opinion of the Court: Provided also, nevertheless, that no White person or free Person of Colour shall be convicted of any of the offences aforesaid, on the testimony of any slaves, unless two of the said slaves, at least, do clearly and consistently agree with each other, and depose to the same fact, act, or circumstance; and also, unless the said slaves are examined apart, and out of the hearing of each other: and provided also, that no person shall be convicted on the testimony of any slaves, for any of the offences aforesaid, unless the same shall be prosecuted within twelve months after the commission thereof. And on the conviction of the person or persons charged with such offence, such offender or offenders shall be subject to a fine not exceeding the sum of one hundred pounds, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, at the discretion of the court; and the proprietor shall or may, moreover, have his action of damages in the court of Common Pleas against any White or free Person of Colour so offending, for any loss of time and labour sustained of such slave or slaves, by him, her, or them so beaten, maimed, wounded, or ill-treated."

We leave it to lawyers to decide, whether, as the above clause is worded, if a slave is only robbed of his property without being beaten, and so has no marks, blows, or wounds to exhibit, the magistrate can proceed at all against the offender

on the testimony of the slave Besides, what value can be affixed to the expurgatory oath of a man who can have acted towards a poor slave in the way that is described?

But whether the law of Dominica be well adapted to its object or not, we can have no doubt as to its being the clear and imperative duty of the Government and Parliament of this country to secure, with as little delay as possible, the general admissibility of the evidence of slaves. At present, their evidence is universally rejected by West-Indian courts (with the single almost nugatory exception of Dominica), in all cases, whether civil or criminal, affecting persons of free condition, on the express ground of their being unworthy of credit. And yet, as we have already shewn, the Jamaica slave code, and indeed every other West-Indian slave code, makes them competent witnesses against their fellow-slaves in all cases, even in capital cases; and this without the sanction of any form of adjuration which they consider as binding. What a strange anomaly is this! Either the pretext that the slaves are unworthy of credit is void of foundation; or every slave who is tried and executed on the testimony of a fellow-slave is cruelly murdered. But we shall be told, perhaps, "We guard against false evidence, by enacting (see slave law of Jamaica of 1816, section 84) 'that, in case any slave shall, with evil intent, give false evidence in any trial had under this Act, such slave or slaves, being thereof convicted, shall suffer the same punishment as the person or persons on whose trial such false evidence was given, would, if convicted, have been liable to suffer.'" And why should not the same guard be equally effectual in cases affecting persons of free condition? We admit, indeed, that slaves ought not to be made to give evidence either for or against their owners (any more than a wife is allowed to give evidence for or against her husband), unless they shall first have been enfranchised. But if even the Pariahs and the meanest slaves in India are allowed to give evidence, each in his peculiar way, in all the local British courts; if the West-Indian slave would be admitted as a competent witness in Westminster Hall, subject only to the same kind of objection to which an Englishman would be subject; what possible reason can there be for continuing to exclude the testimony of slaves from our courts of judicature in the West Indies? There can be no great risk that White juries and

judges will not be sufficiently slow in giving weight to such testimony, even if admitted ; and, without a question, unless it be admitted, the result of the best-framed laws of amelioration and protection will be, what the Dominica legislature candidly states to have been the result of such laws hitherto, namely, that, " the evidence of slaves being inadmissible, the enactments have proved of little effect."

S.

" Nothing can be more satisfactory than these reports (of Governors, &c.) to shew the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the slaves." (p. 80.)

To judge of the real value, however, of these reports, it ought to be known, that in 1790 and 1791 the following Admirals and Governors of Colonies were examined at the bar of the House of Commons, respecting the condition of the slaves, during the space of thirty or forty years prior to that period ; namely, Admirals Rodney, Shulldham, Hotham, Barrington ; Arbuthnot, Edwards, Parker, Lambert, and Gardner ; and Governors Lord Macartney, Dalling, Payne, Campbell, Orde, and Parry. All these witnesses (some of whom also eulogized even the Middle Passage), concurred in affirming, that the masters were humane and attentive ; that the slaves were well clothed and fed, better than the labouring people in this country ; that their treatment, particularly that of the field Negroes, was mild and humane ; that they had never known any cruel treatment ; that the lives of the slaves were as happy as those of the peasants in this country—nay, said some of them, infinitely more comfortable than that of the labouring poor in England, or any other part of the world they knew ;—that no more labour was required of them than they could well bear ; and that they were well satisfied with their condition, and always cheerful. Two of these witnesses remarked, that they even envied the condition of the slaves, and wished

to be in their situation : they wished themselves to be Negroes ! This testimony, concurrently given by so many respectable men in 1790, is much stronger in favour of the happiness of the slaves of that period, than any thing adduced by Mr. Marryat with respect to their condition in 1817 and 1818, even after twenty-seven years of alleged progressive improvement. The evidence he has adduced is feebleness itself, when compared with the strength and universality of the eulogy of these older witnesses ; although it is the object of Mr. Marryat's speech to shew that great improvements have taken place since their time. If, however, great improvements have since taken place ; and if it nevertheless be true that the Negroes (men, women, and children) are still mere chattels,—the absolute property of their master, who may at pleasure sell or transfer them, or even expatriate them for ever ; that they may be seized or sold for his debts ; that they are driven by the whip to labour for which they receive no wages ; that they have no Sabbath, and no legal marriage ; that their flesh may be lacerated with impunity, to the extent of thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip, at the bidding of an individual, their master or his delegate, for any offence, or for no offence ;—if all this be true (and if it be denied, we are ready to prove its truth), then what must have been their state thirty or forty years ago, before the vaunted modern improvements had even been thought of ? And yet, *before* they had been thought of, we have testimony upon testimony, even to satiety, and that of the most imposing description, which places the happiness of the West-Indian slave so high as to make him an object of just envy to the British peasant. How is this phenomenon to be explained ? It admits of an easy explanation, if it were necessary. It is sufficient, however, for our present purpose, to have shewn that such testimony was actually given in 1790.—That, at the same time, the testimony was incorrect (the witnesses themselves, however respectable, having some how or other been deceived as to the real state of things), cannot,—after all that was affirmed in this very debate on the subject of recent improvement, and all that was nevertheless admitted respecting the actual condition of the slave,—cannot, we say, be any longer doubted.

We have shewn that the testimony brought forward by Mr. Marryat is not so strong and decisive in favour of the

humanity of the West-Indian system, as that of 1790. But, besides this, *his* witnesses are not all what he alleges them to be. He affirms them to be, not " West-India proprietors, but Governors, who, as far as their opinions go, must speak disinterestedly, and are least of all liable to be influenced by colonial prejudices." Of the seven witnesses he has produced, however, two—namely, the President of Tobago, and the Assembly of Jamaica—are interested parties, *planters*, not disinterested Governors. General Douglas, instead of being a favourable, is an adverse witness. There are, according to him, *many* instances of the reverse of just and kind treatment, and some of very great cruelty. Governor Probyn's testimony is rendered of less importance, not only by his very brief residence in the West Indies, but by his having treated so lightly the flagrant cruelties of the Rev. Mr. Rawlins. (See Papers from St. Kitts, printed by the House of Commons in 1818.) The remaining witnesses require a more detailed notice.

Sir Ralph Woodford's evidence confutes itself. He tells us, that the slaves " can, if they choose, *with very little trouble*, amass MUCH *beyond the wants of the* *UTMOST ambition or profligacy.*" (p. 80.) Surely this statement is *much* beyond the *sober truth*, and indicates a style of the *utmost* exaggeration. Is it not perfectly plain, that if the slaves, by their labour on *their* one day of the week, can amass wealth, the master, who has the absolute command and usufruct of five of their days at the least, must possess the means of exorbitant accumulation. If the slave's *one* day can be turned to such good account, why are not the master's *five* made equally profitable? The profits of the slaves, be it remembered, do not arise from the payment of wages by the master, which might subtract from his gains, but from the culture of the soil, and the sale of its produce; from means, that is to say, which are equally accessible to the master as to the slave. The same hands which on *one* day are capable of producing such immense returns from the soil as to be even *much beyond the wants of ambition or profligacy*—(the limits Sir R. Woodford assigns to these are not obvious)—are employed, under the stimulating impulse of the lash, on the other *five* days, on the same soil, for the sole benefit of the master; and yet we do not hear that the planters of Trinidad are enriched even to that point

which is necessary for the satisfaction of their creditors. In short, the statement proves itself, on the least reflection, to be hasty, and ill-founded, taken up perhaps from mere loose conversation with slave-holders, and certainly without having been subjected to that scrutiny which must at once have detected its fallacy. If it were true, it would only serve to confirm, what is already indeed sufficiently established, that free labour is more profitable, nay, *infinitely* more profitable, than slave labour.

No man doubts, that "with a *humane* owner" a Negro may be "most happy;" but is not the converse of this proposition equally true, that with an inhumane owner he *may*, nay must, be unhappy? Now, what is charged against the West-Indian system is precisely this,—not that there are not many humane masters; not that every master is harsh and cruel, and makes his slaves miserable, but—that every master may be harsh and cruel, and may make his slaves miserable *with impunity*. But then comes the effectual check which Sir R. Woodford apprehends that self-interest imposes on the abuse of the master's power. But do men never mistake or neglect their interests? Are they always sober, always dispassionate? Look at the cases of Rawlins, Huggins, Hodge, Carty, and Bowen, and of multitudes besides.—Moreover, is it always clear that a master's pecuniary interest is on the side of humanity to his slaves? Is not the case of a jobbing-gang, for example, in the West Indies, a case precisely parallel to that of post-horses in England? A jobbing-master, we will suppose, receives five pounds an acre for digging land into cane holes. Is it not a matter of mere calculation in this case, as in the case of post-horses, whether, at the end of ten years, by extracting a greater portion of labour from his slaves than is consistent with their comfort and increase, although at the end of that time they may be diminished in value, he may not be richer than he would be, if he should work them moderately, feed them well, and preserve their strength and value unimpaired? But this sordid and cruel calculation is not necessarily confined to jobbing-gangs. Suppose a planter to purchase land in Trinidad, and to remove thither from some neighbouring island a gang of Negroes for its cultivation. Is it no object with him to save a whole year's crop, by pressing forward the clearing and plant-

ing of his land? The delay of a month or two may be ruin to him, should the proper season be lost for planting. Has he then no pecuniary temptation to over-drive his slaves? Similar cases, cases too of daily occurrence, might be multiplied.

The soundness of this reasoning is curiously illustrated in a report of the Jamaica Assembly of the 23d November 1804, from which it appears that it is often deemed by planters their interest to extend their sugar cultivation far beyond their means, in the hope of extricating themselves by a great effort from their pecuniary difficulties; as a large crop may procure them further advances of capital, in the way of loan. Even at the present moment, the planters of all the islands are telling Parliament, in their petitions, that unless they can get a better price for their sugars their slaves must starve; in other words, that it has ceased to be their interest to feed their slaves and to prevent their starving. And yet all this is said in the face of Sir R. Woodford's statement (and similar statements have been made by many of the Colonial Assemblies), that the slaves can, if they choose, with very little trouble, amass much beyond the wants of the utmost ambition or profligacy. Nay, the Assembly of Jamaica, who now tell us their slaves must starve if the price of sugar is not enhanced, in their report of 1816 gravely assured us "that one day's labour in Jamaica will produce as much food as twenty-five could raise in Europe." Now, as the population of Europe do contrive, in the 313 working days of the year, to raise food enough to prevent their starving, it follows, that, by applying a twenty-fifth part of that time, or twelve days and a half in the year, to the growth of provisions, the slaves in Jamaica would at least escape being starved: and that by giving them the Sundays, and a few days beside, they would be placed in the same enviable condition which Sir R. Woodford describes as being that of the slaves of Trinidad. And yet, while the slave, with his scanty fragment of time, has thus the means of wealth completely in his power, the master, who has the absolute controul and disposal of the remainder of his time, can scarcely contrive to exist on its produce!!! Such are the tales by which the Parliament and people of England have been, and continue to be, beguiled, with respect to West-Indian slavery. Is it not perfectly obvious that one of two things must be the case,—either that the statement of the Jamaica Assembly

of 1816 is untrue, or that there is no truth in the statements which affirm that the slaves must starve if the price of sugar is not enhanced? We cannot think so ill of the West-Indian planters as to believe that they would permit their slaves to starve, when, according to their own shewing, the application of a few days' labour in the year would effectually obviate the possibility of such an evil, and even load the slaves with abundance.

Sir R. Woodford tells us further, that "the comforts of the slaves depend upon themselves and their own industry, and their health upon their own imprudences"—but then comes a fatal OR—"or the quantum of work they are required to perform." What, then, shall secure them and their comforts and their health against this fatal alternative? Against this there is no security, even in Trinidad, although its institutions are more favourable to Negro happiness than those of any other of our colonies. But that island is cursed (and a curse it is, where its produce is to be extracted by means of whip-driven slaves) with a richer soil, which, making Negro labour there comparatively more profitable than in the other islands, leads to a severer exaction of it. To this cause mainly, we believe, is to be attributed the dreadful waste of African life which has taken place in Trinidad since it became a British colony; a waste perhaps equalling, if not surpassing, any thing yet known even in the annals of West-Indian plantership.

But the most extraordinary statement on the part of Sir R. Woodford remains to be noticed. "I have *frequently*," he says, "known cases of Negroes preferring to continue slaves, rather than, with ample means, to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it." We must frankly say that we do not believe this statement, though, without doubt, Sir R. Woodford is persuaded of its truth. We trust that, in the next session of Parliament, the Governor of Trinidad will be required to produce the names of the Negroes whom he has *frequently* known to prefer continuing slaves, "rather than, with ample means, to purchase their freedom, or even to accept it;" and that he will add to their names their age, sex, place of residence, and peculiar circumstances (for such instances of rare felicity ought not to be concealed); specifying also, whether their preferring to continue slaves themselves did not arise from their rather

wishing to employ their "simple means" in redeeming their children from slavery. It is notorious, that at the Bay of Honduras, for instance, a large majority of those slaves who attain, late in life, the means of purchasing their freedom, choose to employ those means in purchasing the freedom of their children rather than their own.

This statement of Sir R. Woodford is the more extraordinary, because it is well known that at Trinidad there is no general indisposition in the slaves to procure or to accept manumission. The proportion in that island of free Blacks and Coloured Persons to the slave population, is three times as great as in any other colony, and ten times as great as in some.

On the whole, it must be admitted that the evidence of Sir R. Woodford (whom Mr. Marryat mistakenly represents as a correspondent of the African Institution) does not very conclusively or satisfactorily establish the points which it has been adduced to substantiate.

With respect to Mr. Marryat's remaining witnesses, Colonel Maxwell and Colonel Arthur, they are rather unfortunately chosen. The delusion under which their first letters, quoted by Mr. Marryat, were written, was soon dispelled. Colonel Maxwell shortly after found it necessary to interfere in behalf of the oppressed slaves; but many of his efforts were frustrated by the perverse opposition of the colonists. His conduct in bringing cruelty to light, and endeavouring also to bring it to punishment, was presented by the grand jury of Dominica as a nuisance; nor was it less obnoxious to the House of Assembly of that island. In short, he was almost uniformly opposed in his efforts to abate and punish oppression.

As for the more matured views of Colonel Arthur respecting the real state of colonial bondage, it is only necessary to refer to Mr. Buxton's reply (p. 109), and to the fresh correspondence with Lord Bathurst, which was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 16th of June 1823. A part of that correspondence has already been inserted in Appendix B.; but as it is of some importance to appreciate accurately the value of the statements so triumphantly made respecting West-Indian improvement, we shall not hesitate to take from it some farther extracts,

charging the jury, in no way whatever adverted to the dreadful instrument with which the punishment had been inflicted; to the poor slave's ear having been cut through; to the frightful blows on her face, or to the confinement in chains (every part of which is illegal by the consolidated slave-act of Jamaica, which is by the law professed to be acknowledged in the courts of this settlement, *although the act is not in the country*), but briefly observed, that *by law every owner was justified in punishing to the extent of thirty-nine lashes*; and therefore the only point for the consideration of the jury was, Whether a greater number of lashes had been inflicted in the present case? WITHOUT FIVE MINUTES HESITATION THE PRISONER WAS ACQUITTED!!"

Again, on the 28th September 1821, Colonel Arthur writes:

"On the 11th instant, I received the enclosed report, No. 1, from the officer of police, stating the illegal punishment he had been required, by Mr. Bowen, a magistrate, to inflict on one of his slaves; and also detailing a most severe punishment which he had in part carried into effect at the instance of the Bench, but with the further execution of which he hesitated to proceed, as it appeared to him contrary to law. Immediately on receiving this information I addressed the magistrates, informing them, I was sorry to find, on a bare commitment, without any trial or evidence whatever, a very severe punishment had been ordered on four slaves, and intimating, it was unknown to me that any power was vested in the Bench to cause punishment to be so summarily inflicted. I requested some explanation on the subject.

"In their reply the Bench endeavoured to gloss over the matter as well as they could, setting forth, that the trial of slaves by jury was a heavy expense to the country; that they had acted with no intention of infringing the laws of the settlement, or the rights of the slaves; that under a heavy penalty, whether competent or not, they were obliged to act as magistrates, and consequently, their fellow-settlers always viewed their conduct, when not strictly regular, with every indulgence.

"Although their proceeding was in direct violation of the law, I animadverted upon it in milder terms than I should otherwise have been disposed to have done, from the impres-

sion that two of the magistrates (it being their first year in office), might have acted without consideration, under the influence of Mr. Bowen, who, as an older magistrate, was well acquainted with the laws and customs of the court; and to whom, from his well-known character, I could have no hesitation in referring the whole matter, although it was difficult in such a case officially to attach the blame where I felt it ought to have rested; I did so, however, as far as I could with propriety, and also directed all the poor slaves to be instantly liberated and delivered up to their respective owners.

“ In the course of investigating this flagrant attempt upon the rights of the slaves, I was led to the knowledge of Mr. Bowen having confined the poor slave in chains in his own premises, whom the police officer had refused to place in that situation in the jail; and an affidavit made before one of the magistrates of his general cruelty and inhumanity was at the same time laid before me. Having fully ascertained the unexceptionable character of the complainant, and made every investigation which prudence could suggest, I determined to issue a search-warrant, and your Lordship will perceive by the return of the officer of police on the back of the warrant that the slaves were found chained in the manner described in the affidavit.

“ The warrant having been examined on the following morning by the Bench, Mr. Bowen was ordered for trial on the 25th instant; but I must here observe, that although the evidence on the examination was most clear and distinct, the majority of the three magistrates deemed it so very doubtful whether the offence could be considered a breach of any law, or whether there had been any further punishment inflicted by Mr. Bowen than an owner was justified in giving his slave, that they were much disposed to question the propriety of any prosecution; this, of course, convinced me of the feeling and disposition of the Bench.

“ In order that I might be under no error from misrepresentation, I attended the trial, and the following circumstances were most clearly and distinctly proved, indeed not denied; that on the bare suspicion of having made away with some handkerchiefs committed to her care to dispose of, a poor female slave was tied up by order of her owner and severely

flogged, and then handcuffed and shackled, placed in an old store, infested with vermin and the noisome flies of this country. After being in this situation for five days and nights, Serjeant Rush, a military pensioner, interceded with Mr. Bowen for her release, and having pledged himself, if the handkerchiefs were not found, to pay the exorbitant sum demanded, the poor creature was liberated on Sunday about mid-day. On the following morning she left her owner's house to make her complaint and seek redress: for this, and on no other ground whatever, she was again seized upon, tied down on her belly to the ground, her arms and legs being stretched out, and secured to four stakes with sharp cords, and in this shocking attitude, in the heat of the sun, exposed before the men in a perfect state of nature, she was again severely flogged, in presence of her inhuman master and his brother, upon her back and posteriors, and then sent back to her place of torment, and there again confined in handcuffs and chains, and subsisted on the wretched pittance of twenty plantains and two mackarel per week for above fourteen days. Occasionally, indeed, it appeared, the miserable being was led out by day, and chained to a tree in the yard, and there compelled to wash. This, my Lord, was an offence for which the magistrates could find no law on which to charge the jury, nor the jury any under which to find the prisoner guilty! Most truly, indeed, was it observed by the advocate, in open court, that if they rejected the consolidated slave-law of Jamaica, which by custom and usage had been considered for years as the law of the settlement, he shuddered to remind them that there was the Act of 21st Geo. 3d, chap. 67, which protected even brutes from inhumanity.

“The case of the male slaves actually apprehended by the officer of police, handcuffed, shackled, and loaded with an enormous cattle-chain, in the very dwelling of this magistrate, I need not in this dispatch enlarge upon. If the enormity against the poor female was no violation of the law, this of course could not be deemed illegal.

“The slaves in this country have, for some time past, appeared to require no incentive to agitate their already irritated minds; and therefore to quiet in some degree the alarm which will no doubt quickly spread amongst them, of their being thus deprived of all protection, I have, after assembling the

members of the supreme court as a council, this day issued a proclamation in his Majesty's name, declaring the consolidated slave-law of Jamaica to be in force until others are enacted, copy of which, with my letter to the magistrates, I beg to submit, and of which I trust your Lordship will approve. The measure will no doubt be offensive enough to Mr. Bowen and his partisans, and to many others who have always manifested the most violent opposition to any interference with the dealings of owners with their slaves; but I regard them with indifference in comparison to the manifest injustice and cruelty of abandoning all the slaves to the mercy of their proprietors, *although I still hope there are many who treat them with all the kindness and humanity consistent with their state of bondage.*"

"Enclosure No. 1, in Colonel Arthur's, of 28th Sept., 1821.

"Sir,

"Belize, Honduras, 11th September 1821.

"I beg leave to acquaint you, that on the 4th instant it was reported to me that M. W. Bowen, Esq. a magistrate, had sent a slave of his, by the name of Guy, to the common gaol, with orders to the constable that he, Guy, should be worked on the public works with the convicts in chains. Conceiving that the order was irregular, coming from only one magistrate, and he being the proprietor of the slave, I gave directions to the constable not to pay any attention to the order until I saw the gentleman myself, it being my intention to state my reason for not complying with his order; but being unfortunately unwell, I did not see him until the 10th instant, when a meeting of the magistrates took place at the Court-house, where, in the presence of two other magistrates, M. W. Bowen, Esq. told me, that he had taken his slave out of gaol in consequence of directions given by me for his not being worked in chains on the public works. Upon my replying to him, that without the sanction of the bench I did not think myself authorized to punish a slave in that manner at the instance of his master, he said that he conceived that an order from any magistrate was sufficient authority for me. To this the other two magistrates made no kind of observation, and consequently I am left in the very delicate situation of questioning the orders of a magistrate, or violating what I conceive to be the laws of the settlement.

"I beg also to state, that four runaway slaves were delivered into the charge of the constable on the 3d instant, two of which, named Hero and Marriott, belong to the estate of the late S. Burnham, John to George and James Hyde, and Glasgow to Mr. John Young. The three former were brought from the northward by some Spaniards; the latter was delivered by Mr. Harrison, a clerk to Messrs. Young and Wright, requesting that he might be kept in gaol until Mr. Wright came down the river. On the 5th instant they were brought by an order of the magistrates before the bench, and without any trial whatever, they (the four) were ordered to be imprisoned and worked in chains on the public works for two months, and to receive a corporal punishment of 128 lashes each, at four separate times, a part of which sentence has been carried into execution; but I feel so uncomfortable in proceeding with the further punishment of these people, under the impression that they have not been regularly tried, that I must beg with great submission to bring this representation under your consideration.

"To Colonel Arthur," &c. "Wm. S. Eve, Officer of Police."

Besides these and other instances of unpunished cruelty, Colonel Arthur enters at large into the case of a number of poor Indians, who had been most unjustly and cruelly reduced to bondage:—"these poor Indians had been hunted down and absolutely smoked out of the holes and caves in which they had taken refuge." (*Honduras Papers*, p. 36.) An inquiry was instituted, and the right of these people to their freedom clearly proved, and yet it was the determination of the Honduras colonists not to give them up but by compulsion. The case now awaits the decision of his Majesty's government, and as to the course they will pursue no doubt can possibly exist.

We conceive we have said enough to shew how utterly the evidence adduced by Mr. Marryat fails in proving the point which he wished to establish, namely, "the gradual and continued improvement in the condition of the slaves."

It is perhaps unimportant to remark, that even the assertion that Governor Maxwell was appointed to the government of Dominica through the interest of Mr. Wilberforce, is altogether incorrect.

T.

“ Do not these official reports refute the calumnies thrown out by some honourable Members,” “ and particularly Mr. Wilberforce’s assertion, ‘ that the system of Slavery in the West Indies is a system of the most unprecedented degradation and unrelenting cruelty?’ ” (p. 81.)

WE answer, with the most perfect confidence, that they do no such thing. The statements in the note immediately preceding, to go no farther, and to say nothing at present of the various inherent attributes of Negro slavery as it now exists in the West Indies, sufficiently establish, in its full extent, even the strong language which Mr. Wilberforce has employed.

 U.
Mr. Bernal’s Speech.

WE took an early opportunity of transmitting our report of his speech to Mr. BERNAL for his correction. A severe family affliction, which we deeply deplore, prevented his returning it to us immediately; and we were under the necessity of substituting the very meagre report of it which appeared in the public prints of the day. Mr. BERNAL, however, having since had the kindness to send back our more full report, with his corrections, we feel it due to him and to ourselves to insert it entire in this place. It is as follows:—

“ I had thought, Sir, at the commencement of this debate, that to all appearance we were advancing towards the point of conciliation, and that every subject of irritation would this night have been avoided. But I would ask, whether the topics

my honourable and learned Friend below me (Mr. Brougham) has advanced, are calculated to lead to the results which I believed he had sincerely at heart? The honourable Member for Bristol (Mr. Bright) I think acted not with that discretion which he usually displays, in bringing forward, and creating a discussion with respect to, the contents of certain pamphlets which he read in part to the House; but I must say, that the honourable Member for Winchelsea should not, on such account, have opened the attack which he has just made, and that he should have abstained from indulging in such declamation. I would appeal to the House, whether the honourable Member for Winchelsea (although he has truly pointed out the manifest distinction which exists between the situations of the owner of an estate in the West Indies, and the landed proprietor in England) has not insidiously made an attack upon the West-India proprietors in general; and particularly when he instituted that comparison between the masters of slaves and the owners of post-horses? I would ask my honourable and learned Friend, if he can, upon reflection, consider that this was a sally of declamation he ought to have indulged in, if he sincerely wished to prevent irritation?

“My honourable and learned Friend has asked, What has been done in the way of amelioration or improvement since the abolition of the Slave Trade? I am unwilling, at this late hour of the night, to trouble the House by going through a long detail of facts, running over a period of so many years; but I would tell him, that I know much, very much, has been done since the abolition, and particularly in the island of Jamaica. I would ask him, whether he does not remember that the Consolidated Slave Code, containing upwards of an hundred clauses, underwent, in 1817, a complete revision in the Legislature of Jamaica? If my honourable and learned Friend should answer, ‘I know of no laws having been enacted,’ I can only reply by directly asserting what I have been informed and believe to be the fact, though that assertion may, of course, again be met by replication. If the honourable and learned Gentleman should say, that the West-India colonies have not made any new laws, such a statement, I am assured by those who are well informed on the subject, may be met by a complete denial. My honourable and learned

Friend, not perhaps in the most fair or candid manner, has referred to some advertisements relating to run-away Negroes in the Jamaica Gazettes, and which he has read as it were to excite the attention of the House. Was it, I ask, worthy of the serious cause he advocates? was it worthy of his reputation and talents, upon a question of this vital importance, to aim at directing the attention of the House to these points; and to call down the ridicule, the contempt, the disgust of honourable Members, by stating, from these public newspapers, that a young Negro girl was branded upon the top of her right shoulder, and other circumstances of the like nature; and from thence to maintain, that Negroes were sold in the market like so many horned cattle? My honourable and learned Friend has been pleased to comment upon the controul to which the Negro population is subjected. But is it our fault as West-India proprietors? Are we to blame because we are placed in this situation? Have not the successive Governments of the mother country sanctioned it? I would ask my honourable and learned Friend, whether he thinks it just or candid to call in the aid of ridicule, by introducing topics which can have no other effect than to cast an unmerited share of odium upon the unfortunate West-India planters, and to excite strong feelings of irritation? Amongst a Black and Coloured slave population, consisting of nearly 340,000 beings (as I believe may now be the case in Jamaica), there always must be found a number of run-away slaves. The fact cannot be for a moment disputed.

“Without detaining the House at any length, I would beg to call its attention, and also that of my honourable and learned Friend, to a well-digested Report made in 1816, and drawn up with great labour and talent, by a Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica. By consulting that excellent Report, it will be found that very few impediments (if any) are thrown in the way of the Negro's obtaining justice, who asserts his right or title to freedom, should the same be contested; and it will appear, by a few minutes' inspection of this Report, that the laws do not leave the Negro so destitute of protection as may be commonly supposed. A Negro asserting his right to freedom, in the island of Jamaica, may bring an action in a court of justice to try and enforce such right; and should he fail therein, he may institute other proceedings for such purpose.

Appeals are also allowed to the Negroes, under the laws of Jamaica; and until the appeal be heard and determined the Negro has a right to enjoy his liberty. In this able Report will be found the evidence of the Attorney-General of Jamaica, who deposed to the fact that many actions of trespass have been entertained on the part of Negroes or Coloured persons, for the purpose of asserting their right of freedom, and who by these means recovered, against those opposing such claims, damages to the amount of 250*l.* in some cases. In almost every case where an action of trespass has been brought, or a writ *de homine replegiando* has been sued out, the plaintiffs claiming their rights have obtained redress.

“ My honourable and learned Friend has also asked, Why will not the House of Assembly of Jamaica pass a law to attach the Negro to the soil? At this advanced time of the night, it would be unwise for me to enter into a detail of the whole of the reasons which I have understood have actuated that Assembly in not proceeding to frame such an enactment. But my honourable and learned Friend, I must say, has made the most unfair comparison between the system of culture pursued with respect to the soil of a northern climate like England, and that followed upon the plantations in a tropical country like the West Indies. The vegetable provisions of the Negro, which have been alluded to, are raised upon a soil far different from that on which the sugar-cane is grown. They are cultivated upon two distinct soils; and I would remind my honourable and learned Friend (if he has looked at the Report to which I have before alluded), that it is particularly mentioned therein, that a fair proportion of estates in Jamaica are coffee plantations. The honourable and learned Gentleman does not seem to be aware, in considering the question of attaching the Negro to the soil, that the frequent hurricanes which occur in the West Indies, in time, often wash or force away the soil, and particularly upon coffee properties, and that in such cases the plantations are oftentimes afterwards not worth keeping up. The unfortunate beings then left on the estates, if legally and absolutely attached to the soil, would be compelled to remain, at the risk of starvation. When, therefore, my honourable and learned Friend asks why this is not done, why the Negro is not absolutely attached to the soil; I reply, that

if I had time, and it were not for the danger of exhausting the patience of the House, I could give him most full and satisfactory reasons to prove that the Assembly of Jamaica have been justified in pausing before they adopted such a plan.

“ I am very willing to allow to my honourable and learned Friend, that there are certainly evils of serious magnitude inherent in the state of slavery in the West Indies ; but I would firmly contend (and I think every reasonable man who has thought on the subject must be willing to allow) that as the West-India colonists have not been placed in the situation in which they now stand without the direct and solemn authority of the Legislature of the mother country, and the most express encouragement on the part of the British Government, it is only their due, it would only be an act of mere and positive justice towards them, if the Legislature should now think proper to take their property into its own hands, and to submit it to a system of management essentially different from that which it has hitherto received, that the Legislature of Great Britain should, at the same time, grant to the West-India planters the most liberal, the most full, and the most satisfactory compensation. Whatever weight the argument of the honourable Member for Weymouth may have had with the House, I still contend that the slave is the property of his master ; and I say again, that the Legislature of this country is bound to give to the planter the fullest and most adequate remuneration for any deprivation of, or change in, his right of property, and the most complete indemnity against any dangers which may result from its interference therewith.”

We shall subjoin but a very few brief remarks on the above speech of Mr. Bernal, having in the preceding notes anticipated some of the topics to which it adverts.

The alleged improvements in the condition of the slaves, and the humanity of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica, have already been fully treated of. (See p. 199 and p. 148.)

With respect to the references made by Mr. Brougham to the Jamaica newspapers, and to the proofs he thence deduced of the unprecedented degradation of the Negro slave, it did not require the talents and wit of that gentleman to use them so as to produce a strong impression. A simple inspection of

any one number of the Royal Gazette of Jamaica is quite sufficient, without the aid of eloquence or exaggeration, deeply to affect every feeling mind.

It has been already freely admitted, that a considerable improvement has taken place, within the last six or seven years, in respect to the opportunity allowed to free persons of establishing their right to freedom. Still, the *onus probandi* lies on *them*, at the tremendous risk of hopeless and interminable bondage. Still, not only a black skin, but a tinge of African blood, constitutes presumptive evidence of slavery; whereas the presumption ought surely ever to be in favour of freedom. Besides which, the non-admissibility of the evidence of slaves, or of presumed slaves, must often be fatal even to the most just claims of liberty. This boasted improvement, moreover, be it remembered, is not any protection whatever to the slaves, but only to the enfranchised. It may, to a certain degree, prevent persons from being unjustly deprived of their freedom when once acquired; but it leaves numberless cases of the most grievous oppression wholly unredressed. An example of this kind has just presented itself to our eyes, on opening the Royal Gazette of Jamaica for the 26th April 1823. It will be found to comport but ill with the views of Mr. Bernal, or the statements in the Jamaica Report of 1816.

“ St. Elizabeth’s Workhouse, March 4, 1823.

“ Notice is hereby given, that unless the undermentioned slaves are taken out of this Workhouse prior to Tuesday the 29th day of April next, they will, on that day, between the hours of ten and twelve o’clock in the forenoon, be put up to public sale, to the highest and best bidder, at the Post-office here, agreeably to the Workhouse Law now in force, for the payment of their fees.”

The first in the list of these unhappy persons is the following:—“ SHERIER, a Bermudian, five feet five inches, no marks; says he is free, but has no document; bold looking, full faced, full whiskers, apparently about forty years of age; says he sailed some time ago with a Captain Johnson, on board a brig called the Clump, but whither she was bound he does not say, only that the brig was lost at sea: he is very plausible, and speaks good English.”

In three days after the publication of this advertisement,

and only about a fortnight before the date of Mr. Bernal's speech, this poor fellow, thrown on the inhospitable shores of Jamaica by accident, *speaking good English, saying he is free*, and as a proof of it, though he has no document (and how could a shipwrecked mariner have any document?), yet *having no marks* (no marks even of the whip, we presume), was doomed to be sold to the highest bidder, agreeably to the humane Workhouse Law of Jamaica, for payment of his fees! Can such a state of things be long endured by the Parliament and people of England?

The main error, however, into which Mr. Bernal has been misled, is the statement on which he grounds his objections to the *adscriptio glebæ*, namely, that the soil adapted for provisions is different from that on which sugar-cane is grown: "they are cultivated," he says, "on two distinct soils." Never have respectable men been induced, on grounds more utterly unreal and fallacious, to resist a great and admitted improvement. We take upon us to assert broadly, that the very same lands which are best suited to the growth of the sugar-cane, are also well suited to the growth of provisions, and of many other articles; and we are willing to join issue with the West-Indian planters on that fact. Hear what Mr. Roughley, a practical Jamaica planter, says on this subject. He represents a "dark brown friable, unctuous soil, upon a clay," as the best to produce canes; but adds, that even this soil, "from the exhausting nature of the sugar-cane," requires manure. p. 218. Will any planter say that such land would not be well adapted for provisions? Indeed, Mr. Roughley expressly says, "*So much corn is usually grown through the cane pieces, that seldom a separate corn piece is grown on an estate to afford a supply.*" p. 399. And if cane land will bear at one time both cane and corn, will any man believe that it will not grow corn alone?—Again: Mr. Stewart, another practical planter, says, "The soils adapted to the sugar-cane are the various rich loams and molds, and clay with a superstratum of mold." p. 103. "The soil best adapted for the coffee-tree is a deep brown loam." p. 114. And yet we are to believe that land capable of producing the sugar-cane is not capable of producing provisions or coffee! It is true, that land may grow provisions well which, from its hilly or rocky nature, may be ill adapted

for the cane, or from its exuberant richness may yield sugar of an indifferent quality; but it is no less true, that there is no land, on which the cane will thrive, on which a great variety of other articles, both for food and for commerce, will not also thrive, and which may not, moreover, be converted into luxuriant pastures.

On the subject of compensation, we have only to say, that we shall willingly pay our fair share of whatever sum the West Indians shall prove, to the satisfaction of Parliament, to be fairly due to them for any changes which they may be compelled to adopt, with a view to the early termination of the present opprobrious system.

V.

MR. BARING, "*if called upon to say what part of the globe most particularly excited his sympathy and commiseration, does not believe that he should fix upon the Negroes in the West Indies, as far as regards their food and clothing, and the whole of their treatment.*" (p. 97.)

MR. BARING is of opinion that the sufferings of the Negro have been overstated. Has he no suspicion that his comforts may have been overstated? He intimates none. He reserves his incredulity for those who feel for the Negro, and places his confidence in those who hold him in bondage, and profit by his toil. But the mode by which he has brought himself to this state of mind is worthy of notice. He has seen Negro slavery in Georgia and Carolina, and he infers, from what he saw there, that the picture given of Negro slavery in the West Indies is overcharged. We certainly have no idea that a gentleman bearing the name of Baring, in passing through any portion of the United States, where that name is so known and honoured, could have a fair opportunity of examining, with the necessary minuteness, the state of the plantation slave. Wherever he went he would be attended and fêted. Whatever he saw he would see in presence of kind and anxious hosts.

Offensive sights would be removed. And it could not be expected that the planters of Georgia and Carolina would fail to extol the humanity of the system which they themselves ministered. We must know more of Mr. Baring's means of information, and that his opinion of American slavery has not been formed, as his opinion of West-Indian slavery appears to have been formed, on the testimony of the holders of slaves or their dependants, before we can place implicit reliance upon it. But, even if we waive all these grounds of hesitation, and admit that he has fairly estimated the slavery of Carolina and Georgia, we should still deny that any inference could thence be drawn in favour of the condition of the West-Indian slave. To prove this, to the satisfaction of any sound political economist like Mr. Baring, it is only necessary to compare the progress of population in the two cases, as it is exhibited in authentic statistical records. The slave population of the United States has been increasing, since 1790, at a rate which doubles its number in twenty-two or twenty-three years; while the slave population of Jamaica (and the case in most of the other colonies is equally, if not more, unfavourable), has been *decreasing* during the same period at an enormous rate. The calculation will be found accurately made in Mr. Cropper's "Letter on the injurious Effects of High Prices and the beneficial Effects of Low Prices on the Condition of Slavery," p. 15. The result of it is, that had the Jamaica system not been more rigorous than the American system, the population of that island in 1820, instead of being 340,000, ought to have been about 750,000; thus indicating a waste of human life, in that single colony, in the space of thirty years, of about 410,000 human beings. Nay, the case is still more aggravated when we consider the superior facility with which human life may be sustained in Jamaica, than in Carolina, Virginia, &c.: for though we refuse credit to the exaggerated statement of the Jamaica Assembly in 1816, that about twelve or thirteen days' labour in the year is amply sufficient to supply a slave and his family with food, we nevertheless admit, that the raising of provisions is a much less operose process there than in the slave states of America. We call upon Mr. Baring to account for this vast difference in the progress of population, between the slaves of the United States and those of the West Indies, on any hypo-

thesis, consistent with fact, which does not involve the severe and even oppressive treatment of the latter. He will not say that even the slaves of Georgia and Carolina are too well off; and yet their state, judging by the general results, must be paradise as compared with that of the Jamaica slave. Does the acute and penetrating mind of Mr. Baring see no ground, in this extraordinary comparative decrease, for distrusting both his conclusions and the premises on which they are founded? The present, however, is a case in which general principles are apt to be strangely overlooked. Mr. Baring would revolt from the bare idea of despotic authority being committed to any man, or set of men, even in this moral land. The correct principles and elevated tone of feeling of the individuals entrusted with it, would form no apology in his eyes for delegating to them a power so sure to be abused. While man is what he is, the possession of uncontrolled dominion must lead to wrong and oppression. But all these sound anticipations are reversed in the case of the West Indies. There, men who (Mr. Baring himself tells us) are so deficient in good morals that he deems it an impossibility the slaves should derive any religious or moral improvement from them, are nevertheless invested with an extent of uncontrolled power over the persons and happiness of their dependants, beyond what even the highest magistrates in this country possess; and with this further difference, that the latter are responsible, while the former are not. And yet Mr. Baring does not intimate a doubt that there all is as it ought to be; but seems even disposed to quarrel with those who, being a little more sceptical, have looked into the matter in detail, and have satisfied themselves that the state of the slaves, as to food, clothing, and general treatment, is the reverse of what Mr. Baring assumes it to be.

We feel it to be unnecessary to recur to the statements contained in "Negro Slavery," in proof of the justice of this opinion. The witnesses who have there spoken are alive. They have stated the things which they have seen. They have testified, not to individual instances of cruelty merely, but to the general every-day practice, as actually beheld with their own eyes, on estates where the treatment was better than the average treatment. But Mr. Baring does not believe them. Let him, then, specify the precise points in their statements

to which he objects, and let him afford them the opportunity of verifying them. In the mean time, we beg to refer him, in addition to the details contained in the preceding pages, to another witness, Mr. Stewart. His testimony is to the following effect.

"It may truly be said, that the treatment of the slave depends in a great measure upon the character and temper of his master or manager. How ineffectual to the slaves are humane and judicious laws, if a barbarous master or overseer has it in his power to evade them in various ways! There can be no hesitation in saying, that the slave who lives under the immediate superintendence of a humane and considerate master enjoys a life of as much comfort and contentment as *the condition of a slave is capable of*. This, perhaps, is the utmost that can be said: for, though the wants of the slave may be supplied by the beneficent provisions of such a master, and he may consequently be said to be, so far, more desirably situated than many of the poorer peasantry of Great Britain, yet to argue generally that he is happier than they, an assertion which one frequently hears, is certainly saying too much." "But very differently situated is the poor slave who is doomed to toil for a master of a character directly opposite to the foregoing." "Undoubtedly this is a state of grievous hardship. It may be said that there are few masters of the character here described. It were to be wished it were so; but men's hearts are not likely to be softened by habits of too uncontrolled dominion over their fellow-men. With respect to interest prevailing over a disposition to oppress; while we allow all due weight to this motive, in the prudent and judicious owner, it will not always counteract the petty injustice to which the slave is subject from ignorant masters and unfeeling overseers. A slave may complain, and justly complain, that he is made to labour at unseasonable hours, and on days which the law allots to him; and that he is neither fed nor clothed as the law directs; but who is to prove these transgressions? The slave cannot, for the law does not recognise the validity of his testimony against a White man. If the master were put upon his oath, equally nugatory would be this expedient; for the man who wants rectitude and feeling to be just to his slaves, will hardly assume to serve his ends by perjury. Again: if a slave is

punished or beat with improper and illegal severity, or even cut and maimed—not to mention the numerous acts of petty tyranny to which he is subject under a cruel master—and there is no legal evidence to prove those enormities, the offender cannot be convicted of them. He may, then, go on with impunity in this system of oppression, as long as he can contrive to keep without the reach of the laws. Extreme cases of this nature, it may be said, seldom occur; but such a supposition is no argument that the law should not provide effectually against them. Even murder may escape condign punishment while this defect in the slave laws is suffered to exist. There is only one way of removing this obstacle to the more effectual amelioration of the condition of the slave; and that is, by rendering his evidence, under certain modifications, legally admissible against Whites. Such an innovation would indeed probably raise an outcry among a certain class of persons, who see danger in every boon of kindness extended to the slaves; but a day will arrive, when it will be a subject of wonder, even in the West Indies, that human beings should have been precluded the means of procuring legal redress against injury and oppression; that *the shadow and mockery of justice* should have been held out to them, while an insuperable bar was placed between them and the reality.”

So much for the *general* state of the slaves. Now take an individual case, as given by an eye-witness, Mr. Gilgras, a Methodist Missionary.

“A master of slaves who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money, and, one of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hideous howling, and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This ‘turned her heart within her,’ and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard; tore her hair; ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, ‘*Da*

wicked massa Jew, he sell my children. Will no Buckra massa pity Negar? What me do? Me no have one child!' As she stood before the window, she said, lifting up her hands towards heaven, '*My massa, do, my massa minister, pity me! My heart do so*' (shaking herself violently), '*my heart do so, because me have no child. Me go to massa house, in massa yard, and in my hut, and me no see 'em.*' And then her cry went up to God." (*Watson's Defence of the Methodists*, p. 26.)

Mr. Stewart gives us another case, which could only have occurred in a slave colony.

"An overseer, *well known* as a man of violent and tyrannical temper, was employed, by a great attorney, on an estate for which he was receiver. His treatment of the slaves was so cruel and oppressive, that, after reiterated and fruitless complaints, numbers of them absconded from the property, and would not return to it, doubtless from a dread of the punishment that awaited them. At length, a party of these fugitive slaves formed the desperate and atrocious design of murdering this man; which purpose they effected, and subsequently suffered death for the crime. This man had been suffered to hold his situation for many years prior to this catastrophe, notwithstanding that his cruelties were notorious to the whole neighbourhood. The assassins neither robbed the house, nor molested the wife and child of their victim, though both were in their power." p. 229. Mr. Stewart adds, that "this case was an unusual one." We have no doubt it was: and yet, what must be the state of law and feeling in a community where such a monster was permitted "for many years" to exercise his "notorious" cruelties and oppressions, without the slightest interruption either from employer or magistrate?

But we are unwilling to prolong this discussion. Take, however, one fact, as to food. The law of the Leeward Islands of 21st April 1793, still in force—(see House of Commons papers of 5th April 1816, p. 56)—prescribes, as the weekly allowance of adult labouring slaves, either nine pints of unground corn or beans or oatmeal, or eight pints of pease or wheat flour or corn meal, or seven pints of rice, or eight pounds of biscuit, or twenty pounds of potatoes or yams; and it authorizes the master, in the time of crop, to diminish even this scanty allowance by one-fifth. That this allowance is miserably scanty,

barely sufficient to keep a man alive, will be evident to every one who knows any thing of the matter, or who will make the experiment on a labourer in this country. But it is demonstrated to be so by this fact, that the prison allowance to slaves in Jamaica, and the stated allowance to labouring slaves in the Bahamas, is more than double the allowance to labouring slaves in the Leeward Islands, being twenty-one pints of corn or wheat flour, fifty-six pounds of yams or potatoes, &c.

Mr. Baring thinks, with the West Indians, that the slaves are as happy as the peasantry in England. "But let us suppose a state of things in this country, in which every bailiff of an estate should be armed with a power of driving the labourers, both men and women, to their work, by means of the lash; and should also be at liberty to use his entire discretion as to the infliction of punishment, by confinement to *any* extent, and by the cart-whip to the extent of *thirty-nine lashes on the bare body*, for any conduct which he might construe into an offence: what, in this case, would be the condition of the English peasantry? And can we regard the overseers of the West Indies as safer depositories of power than English bailiffs would be? Or are the overseers of the West Indies angels, and not men, that there is no risk of their abusing the authority thus reposed in them?"—(*Review*, &c. p. 17.)

For a reply to what Mr. Baring says respecting the opinions of Governors, &c. we beg to refer to Appendix S, p. 190.

W.

"Moral degradation," &c. (p. 98.)

MR. BARING admits the sad moral degradation of the Negroes. But is it not obvious that that admission involves so much culpable negligence (to say no more) on the part of the masters, as of itself furnishes a strong presumption that all cannot be as right in other respects as Mr. Baring would flatter himself it is?

X.

"The danger is extreme," &c. (p. 99.)

MR. BARING quotes the authority of Sir James Leith, the Governor of Barbadoes, in support of the assertion that the Barbadoes commotion in 1816 was owing to reports of what was doing at home. Where is that authority to be found? We do not believe that any such has ever been produced. On the contrary, the Government of the day declined to produce Sir James Leith's dispatches, and the West Indians prudently forbore to call for them. It is competent to Mr. Baring, however, now to call for them; and we trust he will do so, feeling perfectly persuaded that they will throw a new and instructive light on the whole subject. They will tend, we have no doubt whatever, to dissipate the alarms which are sedulously creating at the present moment, to serve an obvious purpose, by rumours of apprehended insurrection; and which new plots may even be got up to magnify—plots issuing, like former plots, in the destruction, not of any White life, but of abundance of Black lives. These rumours of plots, and these paragraphs of alarm, are quite familiar to all who lived during the Slave-Trade controversy. There was a regular importation of them every year; and so there will be again.

We will admit that a discussion about an Agrarian law might, under certain supposable circumstances, produce agitation in the minds of the lower classes in this country. We do not believe, however, that it would, unless they were suffering severely from the pressure of some great and touching evil, which they supposed the Government and Parliament could obviate. But there is no analogy between the two cases. Here, almost every man we meet can read, and understand, and discuss: in Barbadoes, we question whether any one slave can read a newspaper, if he could have access to it. And who is to communicate intelligence to him on the subject? The Whites and People of Colour are interested, as they conceive, in withholding such intelligence from him.—But should we,

either in our own case or in that of Ireland, admit it as a valid reason for forbearing to discuss great and acknowledged evils, under which the mass of the population might labour, with a view to their effectual relief, that the minds of the sufferers might be agitated by the discussion? If so, what evil could ever be remedied? But surely the danger is infinitely less in discussing, at 5000 or 6000 miles' distance, the evils under which the ignorant, non-reading slaves of Jamaica, Demarara, or Barbadoes labour, especially as almost every one of them speaks only a jargon which would be unintelligible in this country, and to almost every one of them the language of our newspapers would be still more unintelligible. Of this, whatever may be said on the subject in Parliamentary speeches, and in Memorials and Reports from the islands, resident West Indians are as fully persuaded as we are. Even this very year, when the use made of such insertions by their opponents should have taught them a little controversial prudence, what do we find in the Royal Gazette of Jamaica? In the *Supplement* to that Gazette, from May 31 to June 7, 1823, is inserted a letter on the subject of the projected emancipation of the slaves, signed "Quercus," and dated "St. Ann's, May 14, 1823," which had originally appeared in the Jamaica Journal. It is too long to be transcribed, but it may be seen, by any gentleman who wishes to satisfy himself respecting it, either at Lloyd's, or at the Jamaica Coffee-house. The only attempt at disguise, is the flimsy one of printing Mr. Wilberforce's name thus, "W——e;" and the word emancipation (though this is not done uniformly) thus "e——n." Considering the whole drift and texture of this paper, such expedients can serve no better purpose of concealment, than the attempt of the foolish bird to conceal itself by hiding its head under its wing. No Negro, who could understand the discussions in our newspapers, if he had access to those papers, but must see from this Jamaica Gazette, published in Kingston, and transmitted to almost every plantation in the island, that there is at this moment a violent conflict between the planters of our Colonies, and a large party in England who espouse the cause of the slaves; and that their freedom is the subject of debate. This is manifest from every line of the long and inflammatory letter of "Quercus." But will

any one believe, that, if there were any truth in the statements of apprehended danger from Parliamentary or public discussion on this point ; if there were any truth in the statements that the Negroes would be inflamed to insurrection by these discussions, or even that they had any means of hearing of them, or understanding them ; a letter of this description would have been suffered to appear first in the Jamaica Journal, and then, for the manifest purpose of more extensive circulation, be inserted in the Royal Gazette of the Island ? It is absolutely impossible.

The paper begins with a violent attack on the "African Society," although that Society has taken no part in the present movement. They are stated to "have never ceased, by their emissaries and reports, to aim at the anticipation of their ultimate schemes in the excitation of rebellion." Those emissaries (we need not say, the mere figment of the writer's brain), "*many of whom are now in this island,*" were sent out, "like Saul, breathing fury and slaughter," but were converted from their horrid purposes by the mere sight of slavery : "They have perceived, instead of the horrible and disgusting illusions attached to the name of *slavery*, the complete happiness of *the Negroes* ; they have perceived that *slavery exists only in the name*, which in this country, compared with the boasted liberty of some of their own countrymen, is a *service of perfect freedom*."—This is surely sufficiently intelligible.—The substance of the violent debate which took place on the Registry Bill, on the 19th June 1816, is then given, and the writer proceeds to revile the Abolitionists : "Language possesses not terms sufficient to convey the horror and detestation in which" their conduct "ought to be held." Their deceit "would be disgraceful to the inmates of Pandemonium itself. Blood and massacre their objects ; privileged in the practice of the most malignant passions ;" &c. Again, "Even Mr. W——e himself, on that day declared that it was too much for a patient man to hear without emotion, that he and his friends should be charged with endeavouring to *excite insurrection*, when for twenty-seven years they had been continually vindicating themselves from the charge of *wishing to make the slaves free*."—We do not quote the words of "Quercus" as being correct in point of statement, but as shewing, that, in

the very heart of this slave colony, they are not half so fearful as some of our senators are, lest "one rash word, one too ardent expression, should raise a flame not to be extinguished." Even Mr. Canning is quoted as having declared that the House of Commons never entertained the notion of including "*emancipation*" [at full length, thus giving the key to the cipher in other parts] "with the measure of abolition."

After this, who will may believe the allegations of danger of insurrection among the slaves from the public discussion of their condition in this country.

Y.

"Are any of these cases to be compared with the West Indies," &c., "the Slaves outnumbering the Whites by at least ten to one?" (p. 100.)

AND yet, what would gentlemen have? We cannot make cases. We must take the best analogies we can find; and certainly those produced by Mr. Buxton, notwithstanding the statements of Mr. Baring, are abundantly strong. But there are still stronger to be produced. That of Hayti, and that also of Sierra Leone, are, in their different ways, very decisive confirmatory presumptions in favour of the safety, and also of the beneficial effects, of emancipation voluntarily conceded. Both these cases will be found fully stated in Mr. Clarkson's "*Thoughts on the Necessity of improving the Condition of the Slaves, and on the Practicability, Safety, and Advantages of Emancipation*;" a work which we particularly recommend to the perusal of Mr. Baring. Mr. Clarkson has omitted to notice the case of Guadeloupe, which is still more in point than any he has mentioned. We have already briefly adverted to it; and we hope hereafter to give a more detailed statement of the history and effects of this striking experiment in Negro emancipation. As to the disproportion of ten Blacks to one White in our colonies, that disproportion was at least as great in Guadeloupe, and it is ten times as great in Sierra Leone.

Z.

"If these children are born free, who is to take care of them?"
"You do away the interest of the proprietor in them:" *"it*
will not be worth his while to bring them up." *"He has not*
the same reason for taking care of the mother or the offspring."
 (p. 101.)

WE really do not think so badly of the West Indians as Mr. Baring seems to do. We do not believe they will kill the children because they are to have no permanent interest in them. But, in fact, they have a permanent interest in the future tenantry and labourers of their estates. What is it that gives to land, any where, its value, but population? And what an astonishing rise has taken place in the value of land, wherever a free population has increased? Waving, however, this view of the subject, we would ask Mr. Baring, Who takes care of them now? In Jamaica, and many of the other colonies, they are now fed, from infancy till they can provide for themselves, by their parents, and, with slight exceptions, by their parents alone. This they have done hitherto by means of their Sundays and a day in a fortnight out of crop. But if a day in the week be added, as it ought, and as we trust is intended, to the Sundays, they will then possess more adequate means of providing for them. If the time now granted them has hitherto been deemed sufficient by West-Indians (we certainly do not think it so) for the maintenance of the slaves and their families, then they must admit, that, with an additional day in the week, there can be no doubt as to the sufficiency of their means. We may, in that case, safely leave the question of food, which is a most important question, to parental affection. As for clothing, the Negro children now go in general stark naked. Its cost, however, in any case, would be a mere trifle, and, considering all we have heard of the facility with which Negroes raise provisions, poultry, pigs, &c., and the prices they obtain for them in the market, would be easily procurable. Then, when the children arrived at the age of five or six, they would be capable of doing much to aid their parents and maintain themselves. We have seen, that at that age they are now formed into gangs, (p. 181), under a driveress; and that they are made extremely

useful in weeding canes, distributing manure, &c. Indeed, in weeding canes, a most important work, they do nearly as much as adults. If the labour of an adult, in twelve or thirteen days in the year, can produce such results as the Jamaica Assembly and Sir R. Woodford tell us it will, then the labour even of children of this age, continued for every day in the year, must be attended with very considerable effects, increasing daily as they advance in life. A large portion of their time would, however, we trust, be given to other objects, and particularly to that of education. And this point Mr. Baring has wholly overlooked. The plan of emancipating the children is inseparably combined with a system of instruction conducted under the superintendence of Government, and of proper persons appointed by them. Even if the proprietor's interest in the children could be regarded as lessened by this arrangement, a substitute would be found for it in the care of the teachers who would be required to conduct their Christian education. A system of strict regulation and controul, proceeding on general rules, and not on private caprice, would undoubtedly be indispensable; and the public police might, if needful, be invigorated as the private police was relaxed. But into these points of detail it is not necessary now to enter. All we meant to do, in adverting to the subject, was to shew that Mr. Baring's objection to the plan was not so well founded as he seems to have apprehended; and that, as far as there is any weight in it, it divests West-Indian proprietors of all those kindly feelings which induce the English gentleman to labour for the temporal comfort and moral improvement of his poorer neighbours.

AA.

"If we arrive at a free Black population, the islands will be gone from this country." "Such a population will not consent to devote their labours to proprietors resident in England."
"Establish such a state of society, and the colonies would be of no farther value to Great Britain." (p. 102.)

SUCH is the argument of Mr. Baring.—Undoubtedly it would be most absurd, to suppose that a free Black population would

continue to devote their labours to proprietors resident either in the West Indies or in England. It would be the very height of extravagance to entertain such an idea. It would be the same absurdity which is now involved in maintaining that the slaves labour for their masters without the stimulus of the whip. But would the proprietors of the soil be worse off, or would the public interests suffer, if labourers in the West Indies worked, as labourers in England work, from a view not to the benefit of their employers, but of themselves? A free Black population would unquestionably act upon the same principles, and with the same ends in view, as a free White population. They would be stimulated by a regard to their own interests, not to that of their employers; but under the operation of this principle the interests of employers, as well as the general interests of the state, would, in the West Indies, as in every other portion of the globe, be more effectually served than they can possibly be by compulsory labour under the lash. We refer Mr. Baring to Mr. Cropper's and Mr. Adam Hodgson's pamphlets for proof of this proposition. It is a proposition, indeed, about which we scarcely can believe that his own enlightened mind can entertain a doubt. We may have less sugar from the West Indies, but we shall have it from some other quarter. We shall, however, have a far more extended consumption of our manufactures there; and far more of individual comfort and enjoyment.—Supposing that Bonaparte had not madly attempted to restore the cart-whip in St. Domingo, would that island have been lost to France? Touissant had preserved it for France. He had driven the English from it. He had established tranquillity throughout the island. He had revived agriculture. The testimony of the French functionaries residing in St. Domingo at the time, General Vincent, General La Croix, and Colonel Malenfant, is express and unequivocal as to the astonishing state of prosperity to which the island had been restored, and the order which reigned in every department of its administration. Would St. Domingo, under these circumstances, have been of no value to France, had France been wise enough to cherish the freedom of the Negroes, instead of vainly attempting to crush it? She would at this moment have possessed a far more formidable West-Indian power, and a more extensive West-Indian commerce, than we

possess. Even after all the devastations which that island has undergone, and under all the serious disadvantages which it still experiences, besides maintaining a large and growing population in the overflowing abundance of all the necessaries of life, and defraying all the expense of civil and military establishments and of education also, it carries on a very considerable foreign commerce. In the year ending September 1821, 50,000 tons of shipping, belonging to the United States alone, were employed in the trade of Hayti. Again: is the trade of India, or Java, or Ceylon, less valuable, because the inhabitants are free, and labour for their own benefit, and not for the benefit of masters, either present or absent?

We will present Mr. Baring with a striking fact illustrative of our views of this subject; and although the details will occupy more space than we could have wished, yet they are too important, and too well authenticated, to be omitted.

In the year 1776, Samuel Nottingham, a Quaker, who became possessed of a small estate in Tortola, to which were attached twenty-five Negroes—viz. six men, ten women, four boys, and five girls—determined on manumitting them. He accordingly did manumit them by the following deed.

“Be it remembered, that whereas I, Samuel Nottingham, of Long Island in the province of New York, gentleman, am owner, or reputed owner, of a number of Negroes, on the island of Tortola, in the English West Indies; and considering that liberty is their right and property, which in equity, justice, and good conscience ought to be restored to them; and having a testimony in my heart against the iniquitous practice of enslaving our fellow-men; therefore, as far as in me lies, I conclude it necessary for me to grant unto the said Negroes their natural right of freedom, and, accordingly, I have granted, and by these presents, in consideration of Five Pounds sterling to me by the said Negroes paid at and before the sealing of this instrument, and for divers others good causes and considerations me thereto moving, do grant, bargain, sell, release, assure, and confirm, unto all and every of the said Negroes, their liberty and freedom, as fully and amply as though herein particularly and respectively stated. And moreover, I, the said Samuel Nottingham, do covenant and grant, for myself, my heirs, executors, and administra-

tors, to and with the said Negroes respectively, that they, and each of them, shall and may enjoy their freedom, and any estate real or personal which they, or any of them, may acquire, without the let, suit, hindrance, or molestation of me or my heirs, or any person or persons claiming, or to claim, by, from, or under me or them ; hereby quitting all claim and demand to them and their posterity. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 30th day of the 6th Month, 1776.

(Signed) " Samuel Nottingham."

" Sealed and delivered in the presence of us,

" Nicholas Waln,

" Sarah Waln."

About six years afterwards, Samuel Nottingham addressed to one of these slaves the following letter.—

" Dear George,

" Bristol, 30th of 9th Month, 1782.

" Thy letter of the 8th of last 6th Month we received, and it was well pleasing to us to hear of the present good disposition of thyself and the rest of our late servants, whose welfare and happiness both here and hereafter we have much at heart ; but we are sorry to hear of the removal of poor John Venture, and Harry, though not without hopes of their partaking of that mercy which is extended to all, without respect of persons, whether white or black. So, George, remember, what we write to thee we write to all of you who once called us Master and Mistress ; but now you are all free, as far as it is in our power to make you so, because none are free indeed, except they are free in Christ ; therefore, we admonish you, not as your master and mistress, but as your friends and benefactors, beseeching you to be cautious of your conduct and circumspect in your behaviour to all, that none may accuse you of abusing that freedom which we, in the course of Divine Providence, have been permitted to give you. Remember also, that, as free men and women, ye stand accountable for every part of your conduct, and must answer for the same in your own persons, if you do amiss ; in which case the laws where you are have provided a punishment, according to the nature of the offence ; but do well, and ye shall have praise of the same. And that you may be enabled to live honestly among men, we have given you our East-End plantation,

in Fathog Bay, with every thing thereunto belonging, which we will endeavour to have secured to you by all lawful ways and means, that none may deprive you nor your offspring of it, but that you may freely cultivate and improve it to your own benefit and advantage, and thereby be provided with a sufficient subsistence to live comfortably together, in all friendliness and cordiality; assisting each other, that those more advanced in years may advise the younger, and these submitting to the counsel of the elder; so that good order and harmony may be preserved among you, which will assuredly draw down the blessing of the Most High. But if you have not wherewithal to cultivate and improve the plantation yourselves, we advise you to hire yourselves for a season to whom you please, as also the plantation, if you think it necessary, till you acquire a sufficiency to go on yourselves; but in every step you take of this kind, always remember the good of the whole. And as soon as you can make a beginning on the plantation yourselves, with cotton and provisions, we would by all means have you to do it, that you may not be scattered and too much divided; but endeavour to dwell together, and be content with food and raiment; and a blessing will certainly attend you under the influence of such a disposition. Tell Dorcas Vanterpool we are much obliged to her for her friendly care and attendance of poor John Venture and Harry, during their sickness. We shall be pleased to hear how you go on by any opportunity, and that you cautiously maintain a good report among the neighbours. Live in love among yourselves, and the peace of Him who passeth all understanding will assuredly be with you and yours; which we earnestly desire and pray for, being your sincere friends and well-wishers,

(Signed) "Samuel Nottingham.

(Signed) "Mary Nottingham.

"To George Nottingham, one of the Negroes
belonging to the East-End Plantation, late
the property of Samuel Nottingham, at
Fathog Bay, in Tortola."

In the year 1822 this little colony of free persons was visited several times by two highly respectable gentlemen; on whose authority we are enabled to state the following particulars.
"Of the original persons liberated, nine are still alive; besides

whom there are twenty-five of their children, and nine grandchildren; making in all forty-three persons. The whole of them reside on the same plantation, which they have ever since cultivated. Half of it is chiefly in provisions, and the rest is used as pasturage for their stock, which consists of twenty-eight cows, thirteen goats, and thirteen hogs. Formerly they cultivated cotton, but, the price falling very low, they did not continue to plant it. Jeffery Nottingham, one of those originally emancipated, exclusive of his share in the plantation and stock, possesses five acres of land and a house in Spanishtown, and a vessel of twenty-three feet keel. Diana and Eve (born since 1776) have each a boat of seventeen and fourteen feet keel. For some years the seasons were so bad that they found it difficult to get water for their stock, and got little return for their labour: but still they had been able to support themselves, and to acquire the property mentioned above, while they increased in number from twenty-five to forty-three. Not one of them is now in debt; and their property is free from all incumbrance. Twelve of the grown-up persons are members of the Methodist Society, and, with their children, attend regularly the Methodist chapel at East-End, except in case of sickness. During the whole period since their emancipation none of them have been sued in court, or brought before a magistrate to answer to any complaint. Only one of them once obtained a warrant against a person who had assaulted him, who begged his pardon and was forgiven. The same person, on coming from sea, was arrested the day he landed for a capitation tax on free persons, of which he had not been apprized, and put into prison. The next day he paid the money, about eighteen dollars, and was released. Several of them can read and write. Jeffery's wife, Grace, acts as schoolmistress: she reads well. They have lately built three houses in their village, of wood, and shingled. The whole of their houses had been destroyed by the hurricane of 1819, and have since been rebuilt. They are a fine healthy race, all black, having intermarried with each other; and seem to dwell very happily together."

Now, we would put the question to Mr. Baring, Whether it would have been more advantageous for the interests either of the individuals or of the state, that Mr. Nottingham's twenty-five

slaves had continued slaves (liable to all the risks of inhuman owners and overseers, and all the other evils of that condition, and particularly to that progressive diminution of their numbers which has been the common fate of the slaves in almost all our colonies, and among the rest in Tortola); or that they should have been living free and in comfort for nearly fifty years, during which they have accumulated some property, and have increased from twenty-five to forty-three? And, as far as advantage to this country goes, we will venture to say that the forty-three Nottinghams consume more of British produce and manufactures in a year, and promote the traffic of Tortola itself more, than three times the number of slaves would do. But Mr. Baring will say, this is a single instance. True; but why is it so? Not because there are not many slaves who would have equally rewarded the benevolence of their master, but because there has been but ONE NOTTINGHAM.

BB.

"I know no question upon which petitions have been procured with more trick and management than on the present. They have, in fact, been got up by a few persons in the Metropolis."
(p. 103.)

MR. BARING could have had no means himself of knowing the truth of this statement. He has therefore ventured, on the misinformation of others, to lend the weight and respectability of his name to a representation the very reverse of true. Let not Mr. Baring flatter himself that the feeling which has been manifested on this subject is a short and evanescent burst, excited by trick and management. He may rely upon it, it is far more solidly founded. It is founded on a deep-rooted persuasion that slavery is inherently and intrinsically evil; and that our system of colonial slavery, in particular, "is at war with every principle of religion and morality, and outrages every benevolent feeling." In the volume now before him, Mr. Baring may see the whole trick and management of the Committee. They consist in the circulation of the occasional papers prefixed to this volume, and of books openly published

to the world." If in these papers, or these books, there be positions which he can controvert, let him do so; but it is altogether unfair to assume, that to trick and management, and not to the fair influence of discussion, is to be ascribed the interest which this question has excited in the public mind.

Mr. Baring can hardly be serious in attributing all the zeal shewn in this country for benevolent objects, not to a well-founded sense of duty, but to a kind of popish compromise with conscience, by which sin may be atoned for. If he is, it only shews how ignorant very acute and intelligent men may be of what is passing immediately around them.

We do not undertake to defend the "humbug" practised at Vienna and Verona, on the subject of the Slave Trade, from the sarcastic observations of Mr. Baring.

CC.

"It tells, in language that cannot be mistaken, the degree of protection which the laws afford to the Negro." (p. 113.)

IT is a proper sequel to the account which Mr. Buxton has given of Carty's cruelty to his slave Quasheba, to insert an extract of a letter from Lord Bathurst to Colonel Arthur on the subject, dated 12th March 1817:—

"The cruel conduct of this inhuman wretch could not fail to excite all those feelings of pity and commiseration which you so justly describe; and I immediately submitted your letter, with its several enclosures, to the consideration of the law officers of the Crown, to know how far I was authorized to direct you to manumit the unfortunate woman. But they report, that Carty is indictable only for the cruelty committed; *that, as she is his property, there is no power to take her away*, consequently none for her manumission, unless, indeed, there be any law in Honduras which confers the power to manumit slaves under such circumstances. I can therefore only express my concern that such a wretch should remain unpunished; but if you can suggest any mode in which he can be brought to punishment, I shall be most happy to attend to it."

Who, after reading this letter (the declaration of his Ma-

jesty's Government of their absolute impotency to redress such grievous wrongs), can question the indispensable obligation of the parliament and people of Great Britain to interfere to amend this detestable system ?

Before we conclude, we are anxious to point out and rectify a mistake (the only one we have detected in that work) which occurs in the pamphlet called "Negro Slavery." The clause in the 4th section of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica of 1816, which, as we have stated above (p. 153), provides, for the first time, that the number of days in the year allowed to the slaves for the cultivation of their grounds, exclusive of Sundays, shall be at least twenty-six, was overlooked, and the number of days allowed was assumed to be the same as in the Act of 1809, namely, sixteen. This error will, of course, be corrected in any future edition of that publication.

And this reminds us of the necessity of remarking, that it would be absolutely impossible to follow the ever-shifting provisions of colonial legislation, so as to be always correct as to the actual state of the law at the precise moment of writing. We have just learnt, for example, that, in deference to public opinion in this country, the legislature of Barbadoes have recently altered their law on the subject of the murder of a slave, so as no longer to render it necessary to the conviction of the murderer that he should have perpetrated the crime "*without provocation*." And this alteration we shall doubtless hear adduced, both as a proof of our unfairness, and of the growing liberality of the colonists.

It may be proper also to observe, that, notwithstanding the alarms of commotion and conspiracy, sanctioned by proclamations of Governors, and by imposing details of correspondents, which have filled the public ear of late ; we have not been able, after the most diligent inquiry, to discover a single fact to justify them ; and the conclusion to which we have been forced to come is, that such rumours are deemed to be, on this as on many former occasions, very convenient weapons of controversial warfare.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the above sheets were written, two pamphlets have appeared, which may be thought to require some notice.

One of these is from the pen of J. F. Barham, Esq., a West-Indian proprietor, who, at an early period of the Slave-Trade controversy, most honourably distinguished himself by joining the ranks of the abolitionists. He begins his work with assuming that the emancipation of our colonial bondsmen is a measure which is now unavoidable; the nation expecting, and government being pledged “ *that the most energetic measures shall be forthwith employed to bring them into that state in which freedom may be granted to them with benefit and safety.*” The object of Mr. Barham’s pamphlet, therefore, is not to discuss the question of emancipation, but the means of carrying it into effect with safety, and even with advantage; and with a due attention to the claims of West-Indian proprietors to indemnity. It is not our intention at present to investigate the plan proposed by Mr. Barham. Whatever falls from him, however, is worthy of deep attention; and we trust that all who are interested in the question will be ready to give to his suggestions the consideration to which they are justly entitled.

It will be right, however, to remark, that we differ very widely from Mr. Barham in many of his facts and opinions. Some of these will be found to have been met, in the preceding pages, with such observations as will serve to shew what are the grounds of that difference. His cardinal error appears to us to be this, that he conceives the Negro character not to be susceptible of the same motives to exertion which are known to influence every other class

of men that inhabit the earth. Upon this point we are completely at issue with him, on the score both of general principle, and of fact and experience: and we should not hesitate even to take the free Black and Coloured people of Jamaica, under all their obvious disadvantages, and notwithstanding the oppression and degradation to which the state of the law and of the feeling of the Whites subjects them, as our example, to establish undeniably that the African race is equally susceptible with ourselves of all those motives which stimulate to exertion; and that those equivocal appearances which lead superficial observers to the conclusion that they are innately indolent and vicious, and incapable of high advances in improvement, are the effect entirely of the wretched institutions under which they are placed, and which tether them, as it were, to the very earth. While they see in their superiors the very worst moral examples; while multitudes of them are deprived of the means of education and Christian instruction; while they are every where stopped in their aspirings for distinction by barriers which are insurmountable; we cannot wonder that their progress in improvement should not have been greater: the wonder is, that it should have been so great.

Mr. Barham produces, in proof of his views of this subject, a fact drawn from the history of Guadaloupe, during the period of Negro freedom in that island. "Punishment by the whip had been then totally abolished; but, instead of it, a military *tribunal* had been established, consisting of *five Whites and Blacks*, who made a tour of the island once a month, in order to *try* and punish such Negroes as had neglected their work. They were condemned to be chained by the middle and ankle for five to fifteen years. The more refractory were shot, which very frequently happened."—Now, what does this statement (though invidiously specifying only the severest punishments) prove, but that in Guadaloupe public justice was substituted for the caprice of individual tyranny? Circuit courts, composed of *Black* as well as *White* judges were instituted,

and *non constat* that they did not administer the laws impartially, and even leniently. The refractory were shot in Guadeloupe: in Jamaica they are hanged: the difference is not very essential. The main inference, however, from the whole is this: From fifty to sixty thousand slaves were liberated in a day from the power of the driver's cart-whip, and from arbitrary punishment by the master, and were made the immediate subjects of equal laws, and of a police affecting all classes and administered by all classes in common; and yet no commotion followed, cultivation proceeded regularly, and Whites and Blacks united in the discharge even of the highest offices of the state.

We refrain from pursuing Mr. Barham's reasonings on this subject further. They are all dependent on the grand error of his system,—a radical misconception of the capacities and tendencies of the African character, formed on a knowledge of them only in their servile and degraded condition. It is impossible, at the same time, not to honour the candour and ingenuousness of Mr. Barham's admissions. Though he thinks that the slave, in most physical circumstances, is better off than the labouring class of other countries, yet he admits that “in civil and moral respects his condition is not materially changed;” that “his civil rights are yet hardly definable, and his moral improvement is almost yet to be begun;” that the most “specious laws” might not, “from existing circumstances,” “have any practical effect;” that “nothing could be easier than to introduce Christianity *in name*, as for the most insignificant reward the slaves would universally accept baptism;” but that “it were better they should remain as they are, than that a people whose religion, if indeed it can be called such at all, continuing in fact as it is, should be regarded as Christians;” that “nothing could be easier than to abolish *the use of the whip*; but that those who call for this abolition always end by proposing some other means of coercion, some other instrument of punishment; less decried perhaps, but which is to be equally effectual. What, again,” he asks, “will the slave gain by this?

It were better that his chains should appear in their full deformity, than that they should be gilded over."

. Very different from that of Mr. Barham is the other pamphlet to which we have alluded. It is entitled "A Voice from Jamaica, in Reply to W. Wilberforce, Esq.; by the Rev. G. W. Bridges, of Trinity College, Oxford, and Rector of Manchester in Jamaica." We are sorry that the author of it should be a Clergyman of the Church of England. It is a feeble intermixture of intemperate animadversions, incorrect statements, vague apprehensions, and most inconclusive reasonings. We cannot enlarge the present work by exposing these in detail. We shall take, however, a single instance, and it shall be the very strength of his case, in order to shew how little real aid his pamphlet is likely to afford to the cause which he so stoutly espouses. Addressing Mr. Wilberforce, he says—

"In p. 17 of your 'Appeal,' you confidently make an assertion, which it happily falls peculiarly within my province to reply to, upon the authority of that character beneath which I claim credit for my affirmations. You state that 'no attempts have been made to introduce among them (the Negro slaves) the Christian institution of marriage.' Now, Sir, this I positively contradict, by stating that I have myself married one hundred and eighty-seven couples of Negro slaves, in my own parish, within the last two years, all of whom were encouraged by their owners to marry; and that the anxious wish at present expressed by them to bind themselves by this sacred institution, we hail as one of the first fruits of the dispensation of Christian principles. In another parish, St. Thomas in the East, I have reason to know that there have been three times that number married during the incumbency of the present rector, Mr. Trew; and, though not speaking from numerical information, I can safely affirm, that the labours of the clergy in the remaining nineteen parishes have been equally active, and doubtless crowned with the same success." p. 22.

On looking, however, to the returns, recently laid on the table of the House of Commons, from Jamaica, of "marriages legally solemnized between Slaves since the 1st of January 1808," down to 1822 inclusive, we find (p. 130) that in the parish of Manchester not a single such marriage was celebrated prior to 1820. In 1820 *five* marriages took place; in 1821, *three*; and in 1822, *none*. Mr. Bridges must have written his "Voice" in April or May 1823. The expression, "within the last two years," could therefore have extended no farther back than the beginning of 1821. But the *official* return of marriages from the beginning of 1821 to the 17th March 1823, is only *three*. No less than 184, therefore, of the 187 marriages solemnized by Mr. Bridges between slaves, in his own parish, "within the last two years," must have been subsequent to that date. We may well ask, therefore, with a writer in THE TIMES of the 26th August 1823, who adverts to this very statement in the pamphlet of Mr. Bridges, "What can have given birth to this new and ardent zeal in the extension of marriages? Was it owing to the suggestions of Mr. Wilberforce's pamphlet, which had just then made its appearance in Jamaica? Or were these 184 marriages thus suddenly got up in order to furnish a convenient practical refutation of his statements?"

In the Appendix F. (p. 164—167) will be found some remarks on the subject of these returns of marriages, to which we refer the reader. What may have been the "active labours of the clergy" in the other parishes, we have no means of knowing; but we do know that in most instances their labours have been "crowned" with much "the same success" as attended those of Mr. Bridges prior to the appearance of Mr. Wilberforce's Appeal. He was himself rector of St. Dorothy's before he removed to Manchester; but during his incumbency not a single marriage appears to have taken place. Before 1820 no marriage of Slaves had occurred in that parish, and from 1820 only *three*. In many of the other parishes the rectors have been equally unsuccessful. From two

parishes there are no returns—viz. St. Catherine's and Westmoreland—the returns in FOURTEEN YEARS from some of the others are as follow :

St. John's Parish	One marriage.
St. Thomas in the Vale	None.
Vere	One.
Clarendon	Two.
St. Ann's	None.
St. Elizabeth's	None.
St. James's	Two.
Hanover	None.
Falmouth	One.
Port Royal	Two.
Portland	Twenty-seven.
St. Mary's	Thirty-six.
St. George's	Forty-seven.

For remarks on the returns from the remaining parishes, we must refer again to Appendix F. It ought to be kept in view, that the average slave population of each of these parishes is upwards of 16,000 souls.

After this exposition of the correctness of the statements of the Rev. Author, on a point respecting which he must have had access to better means of information than on any other which has occupied his pen, it will not be deemed necessary that we should detain our readers any longer with his pamphlet.

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of Divinity Hall

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A

LETTER

TO

M. JEAN-BAPTISTE SAY,

ON THE

COMPARATIVE EXPENSE

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR.

By **ADAM HODGSON**.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LIVERPOOL,

Printed by James Smith;

**PUBLISHED BY HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY, AND J. AND J. ARCH,
CORNHILL, LONDON.**

**SOLD BY W. GRAPEL, CHURCH-STREET, AND G. AND J. ROBINSON,
CASTLE-STREET, LIVERPOOL.**

1823.

S.C.R.

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no. 4

This Pamphlet is reprinted at the request of the "London Society for Mitigating and gradually Abolishing the state of Slavery throughout the British dominions," and at their suggestion, the extracts from Foreign Authors have been translated.

TO
WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq. PRESIDENT,
AND TO
THE OTHER MEMBERS
OF
THE LIVERPOOL SOCIETY
FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,
THE FOLLOWING LETTER,
PRESENTED TO THEM,
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED.

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

IT is with much concern that I observe, in your excellent and popular work on Political Economy, the sentiments you express on the subject of the comparative expense of free and slave labour. Accustomed to respect you highly, as an enlightened advocate of liberal principles, and to admire the philanthropic spirit which pervades your writings, I cannot but regret deeply, that opinions so much calculated to perpetuate slavery should have the sanction of your authority; and that, while you denounce the slave-system as unjustifiable, you admit that in a pecuniary point of view it may be the most profitable.

As this subject is of peculiar importance at the present moment, when efforts are making, both in this country and in France, to effect the gradual abolition of slavery in the Colonies, I will not apologize for addressing you. The same regard to truth and candour, which secured your reluctant assent to an opinion little in unison, I am sure, with your feelings, will lead you to examine with impartiality any facts or arguments which I may adduce in my attempt to controvert it. Many of them, I am aware, must be familiar to you, but possibly even these may appear in a new light, and derive some additional force from their con-

nection with others which have not fallen under your observation.

The expense of slave-labour resolves itself into the annual sum which, in the average term of the productive years of a slave's life, will liquidate the cost of purchase or rearing, and support in old age, if he attain it, with interest, and the sum annually expended in his maintenance.

If we omit the case of purchased slaves, and suppose them to be bred on the estate, (and as breeding is now admitted to be, under ordinary circumstances, the cheapest mode of supply, your argument will gain by the supposition,) the expense of free labour will resolve itself into precisely the same elements; since the wages paid to free labourers of every kind, must be such as to enable them, one with another, to bring up a family, and continue their race.

Now it is observed by Adam Smith, "The wear and tear of a free servant is equally at the expense of his master, and it generally costs him much less than that of a slave. The fund destined for replacing and repairing, if I may say so, the wear and tear of a slave, is commonly managed by a negligent master, or careless overseer. That destined for performing the same office with regard to the free man, is managed by the free man himself. The disorders which generally prevail in the economy of the rich, naturally introduce themselves into the management of the former; the strict frugality and parsimonious attention of the poor, as naturally establish themselves in that of the latter." The Russian political economist, Storch, who had carefully examined the system of slavery in that extensive Empire, makes the same remark, almost in the same words. Hume expresses a similar opinion in decided terms; and I have now before me a statement from one of the slave districts in the United States, in which it is estimated that, taking the purchase-money or the expense

of rearing a slave, with the cost of his maintenance, at their actual rates, and allowing fifteen years of health and strength, during which to liquidate the first cost, his labour will be at least 25 per cent dearer than that of the free labourer in the neighbouring districts.

It is observed by a planter, in a letter published by the Hon. Joshua Steele, a member of the council in Barbadoes, under the signature of Philo Xylon, "The truth is, that although we plant much more ground than should be sufficient to produce provisions to feed our labouring slaves, yet the negroes, feeling that they have no direct property in these crops, and that we must buy more to supply them if those crops fall short, the cultivation is negligently performed by them, and the produce is afterwards stolen by the negro watchmen or their confederates, so that we seldom reap a third part of what should be the natural and probable produce. But if we could depend on their diligence and economy, in cultivating rented tenements and carefully storing their crops, they might undoubtedly be maintained better than they are, and at a much smaller expense than it costs us at present; not only by our wasting three times as much land as might be necessary for that purpose, but also by our cultivating it with a reluctant gang to our loss." From inquiries made with reference to this subject, it appears that the average weekly expense in the Liverpool Workhouse, for provisions, including ale, wine, spirits, tea, sugar, butter, &c. given to the sick, is 2s 6½d per head, exclusive of rent; while the average weekly expenditure of seven families, taken from among the labourers of a respectable commercial house, is only 1s 5½d per head, exclusive of rent.

From the preceding particulars, it appears highly probable, that the cost of rearing and maintaining a slave,

would render his labour, under ordinary circumstances, at least as expensive as that of the free labourer. Let us next examine which is the most productive.

And here I shall again avail myself of the observations of Storch, the Russian economist:—"The slave, working always for another, and never for himself, being limited to a bare subsistence, and seeing no prospect of improving his condition, loses all stimulus to exertion, he becomes a machine, often very obstinate and very difficult to manage. A man who is not rewarded in proportion to the labour he performs, works as little as he can; this is an acknowledged truth, which the experience of every day confirms. Let a free labourer work by the day, he will be indolent; pay him by the piece, he will often work to excess, and ruin his health. If this observation is just in the case of the free labourer, it must be still more so in that of the slave."

"Whilst the ancient Romans cultivated their lands themselves, Italy was renowned for fertility and abundance, but agriculture declined when abandoned to slaves. Then, the land, instead of being brought under the plough, was transformed into meadows, and the inhabitants of this fine country became dependent for their subsistence on provinces situated beyond the sea. The small proprietors and farmers disappeared, and the same country which had formerly presented the smiling aspect of a crowd of villages, peopled with free men in easy circumstances, became a vast solitude, in which were scattered here and there, some magnificent palaces, which formed the most striking contrast with those miserable cabins and subterranean dens in which the slaves were shut up. These facts, related by the Roman historians, are attested and explained by Pliny, Columella, and Varro. 'What was the cause of these abundant harvests?' asks Pliny,

“ speaking of the early periods of the republic. ‘ It is,
 “ that at that time, men of consular dignity devoted them-
 “ selves to the cultivation of their fields, which are now
 “ abandoned to wretches loaded with irons, and bearing on
 “ their forehead the brand of their degraded condition.’
 “ The superiority of free over slave labourers, is even
 “ acknowledged by the masters, when they have sufficient
 “ intelligence to judge of the difference, and sufficient
 “ honesty to avow their sentiments. Recollect on this
 “ subject the passage of Columella, which I have already
 “ quoted, and in which he depicts the negligence and
 “ perverseness of slave labourers; in the same chapter,
 “ he advances as a fundamental principle, that whatever
 “ be the nature of the cultivation, the labour of the free
 “ cultivator is always to be preferred to that of the slave.
 “ Pliny is of the same opinion.”

“ Observe, that this testimony in favour of free labour, is
 “ given by Romans, who were at once proprietors of slaves
 “ and the most eminent writers on agriculture of their time.”
 “ In manufactures, the superiority of the free labourer over
 “ the slave is still more obvious than in agriculture. The
 “ more manufactures extend in Russia, the more people
 “ begin to feel the truth of this remark. In 1805, M.
 “ Panteleyef, a manufacturer in the district of Moscow,
 “ gave liberty to all his workmen who were slaves, the
 “ number of whom amounted to 34. The same year,
 “ M. Milioutin did the same.”

Brougham, in his Colonial Policy, fully concurs in these
 sentiments: “ It requires very little argument to prove,
 “ that the quantity of work which may be obtained from a
 “ labourer or drudge, is liable to be affected as much by
 “ the injurious treatment he receives, as by the idleness
 “ in which he may be permitted to indulge. When this
 “ drudge is a slave, no motive but fear can operate on his

"diligence and attention. A constant inspection is, therefore,
 "absolutely necessary, and a perpetual terror of the lash
 "the only prevention of indolence; but there are certain
 "bounds perscribed, even to the power of the lash; it may
 "force the unhappy victim to move, because the line of
 "distinction between motion and rest, action and repose, is
 "definite; but no punishment can compel the labourer to
 "strenuous exertions, because there is no measure or
 "standard of activity. A state of despair, and not of
 "industry, is the never-failing consequence of severe chastisement; and the constant repetition of the torture only
 "serves to blunt the sensibility of the nerves, and disarm
 "punishment of its terrors. The body is injured, and the
 "mind becomes as little willing as the limbs are able to
 "exert."

Hume remarks, "I shall add, from the experience of our
 "planters, that slavery is as little advantageous to the
 "master as to the man. The fear of punishment will
 "never draw so much labour from a slave, as the dread of
 "being turned off, and not getting another service, will
 "give a free man.

Burke observes, in his treatise on European Settlements,
 "I am the more convinced of the necessity of these indulgences, as slaves certainly cannot go through so much
 "work as free men. The mind goes a great way in every
 "thing, and when a man knows that his labour is for himself, and that the more he labours, the more he is
 "to acquire; this consciousness carries him through, and
 "supports him beneath fatigues, under which he would
 "otherwise have sunk."

"That the proprietors of West India estates," observes Dr. Beattie, "would be in any respect materially injured
 "by employing free servants (if these could be had) in their
 "several manufactures, is highly improbable, and has,

“ indeed, been absolutely denied by those who were well
 “ informed on this subject. A clergyman of Virginia
 “ assured me, that a white man does double the work of a
 “ slave; which will not seem wonderful, if we consider that
 “ the former works for himself, and the latter for another;
 “ that by the law, one is protected, the other oppressed;
 “ and that in the articles of food and clothing, relaxation
 “ and rest, the free man has innumerable advantages. It
 “ may, therefore, be presumed, that if all who serve in the
 “ Colonies were free, the same work would be performed
 “ by half the number, which is now performed by the
 “ whole. The very soil becomes more fertile under the
 “ hands of free men, so says an intelligent French author,
 “ (Le Poivre,) who, after observing that the products of
 “ Cochin China are the same in kind with those of the West
 “ Indies, but of better quality, and in greater abundance,
 “ gives for a reason, that ‘the former are cultivated by
 “ free men, and the latter by slaves;’ and therefore argues,
 “ ‘that the negroes beyond the Atlantic ought to be made
 “ free.’ ‘The earth,’ says he, ‘which multiplies her pro-
 “ ductions with profusion under the hands of a free-born
 “ labourer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat
 “ of the slave.’ ”

“ It is an ill-grounded opinion,” says Franklin, in his
 “ Essay on the Peopling of Countries, “that by the labour
 “ of slaves America may possibly vie in cheapness of manu-
 “ tures with Great Britain. The labour of slaves can never
 “ be so cheap here, as the labour of working men is in
 “ Great Britain. Any one may compute it. Reckon,
 “ then, the interest of the first purchase of a slave, the in-
 “ surance or risk on his life, his clothing and diet, expenses
 “ in his sickness and loss of time, loss by his neglect of
 “ business, (neglect which is natural to the man who is not
 “ to be benefited by his own care or diligence,) expense of

“ a driver to keep him at work, and his pilfering from time to time, (almost every slave being, from the nature of slavery, a thief,) and compare the whole amount with the wages of a manufacturer of iron or wool, in England ; you will see that labour is much cheaper there, than it ever can be by negroes here.”

Koster, in his *Travels in the Brazils*, observes, “ The slave-trade is impolitic, on the broad principle that a man, in a state of bondage, will not be so serviceable to the community as one who acts for himself, and whose whole exertions are directed to the advancement of his own fortune ; the creation of which, by regular means, adds to the general prosperity of the society to which he belongs. This undoubted and indisputable fact must be still more strongly impressed on the mind of every one who has been in the habit of seeing the manner in which slaves perform their daily labour. This indifference, and the extreme slowness of every movement, plainly point out the trifling interest which they have in the advancement of the work. I have watched two parties labouring in the same field, one of free persons, the other of slaves, which occasionally, though very seldom, occurs. The former are singing, joking, and laughing, and are always actively turning hand and foot ; whilst the latter are silent, and if they are viewed from a little distance, their movements are scarcely to be perceived.”

Hall, adverting to the pernicious effects of slavery on the southern states of North America, observes, “ Experience shows, that the quantity of labour performed by slaves, is much below that of an equal number of free cultivators.”

An intelligent American gentleman, to whom queries on this subject were sent out, remarks, “ I have in one of my answers, exposed the effect of slave-cultivation on the soil of our country, and on the value of real estate. I

“ will here further observe, that independently of this, there
 “ is no fact more certainly believed by every sound mind in
 “ this country, than that slave labour is abstractedly in
 “ itself, as it regards us, a great deal dearer than labour
 “ performed by free men; this is susceptible of clear proofs.”

It is observed by Mr. Ramsay, who had twenty years’ experience in the West Indies, “ I am firmly of opinion,
 “ that a sugar plantation might be cultivated to more
 “ advantage, and at much less expence, by labourers who
 “ were free men than by slaves.” Dr. Dickson, who resided in Barbadoes as secretary to the late Hon. Edward Hay, the Governor of that island, observes, in a letter published in his valuable work, on the Mitigation of Slavery, “ You
 “ need not be informed, that it has been known for many
 “ ages, by men of reflection, that the labour of slaves,
 “ whether bought or bred, though apparently cheaper, is
 “ really far dearer in general than that of free men.”
 “ The arguments which support this conclusion, as applicable to modern Colonial slavery, were long ago assented
 “ to and exemplified by men intimately acquainted with and
 “ interested in the subject.” In another letter in the same work, he gives “ a calculation made under the guidance of
 “ M. Coulomb, an able mathematician and experienced
 “ engineer, who for many years conducted extensive military
 “ works both in France and the West Indies, and has
 “ published the result of his observations.” From this he infers, “ that field slaves do only between a third and a
 “ half of the work despatched by reluctant French
 “ soldiers, and probably not more than a third of what
 “ those very slaves would do if urged by their own interest,
 “ instead of brute force, as Mr. Steele experienced.” In speaking of Mr. Steele’s experience in another place, he remarks, “ He has ascertained as a fact, what was before
 “ known to the learned as a theory, and to practical men as

“ a paradox, *That the paying of slaves for their labour, does actually produce a very great profit to their owners.*” Again, this able and experienced writer observes, “ The planters do not take the right way to make human beings put forth their strength. They apply main force where they should apply moral motives, and punishments alone where rewards should be judiciously intermixed. And yet, strange to tell, those very men affirm, and affirm truly, that a slave will do more work for himself in an afternoon, than he can be made to do for his owner in a whole day or more. Now what is the plain inference? Mr. Steele, though a stranger in the West Indies, saw it at once, and resolved to turn it to account. He saw that the negroes, like all other human beings, were to be stimulated to permanent exertion only by a sense of their own interests, in providing for their own wants and those of their offspring. He therefore tried rewards, which immediately roused the most indolent to exertion. His experiments ended in regular wages, which the industry he had excited among his whole gang, enabled him to pay. Here was a natural, efficient, and profitable reciprocity of interests. His people became contented ; his mind was freed from that perpetual vexation, and that load of anxiety, which are inseparable from the vulgar system, and in *little better than four years, the annual nett clearance of his property was more than tripled.*”

“ I must additionally refer,” remarks the same intelligent writer in another place, “ to an excellent pamphlet, entitled *Observations on Slavery*, (published in 1788, and now out of print,) by my late worthy friend Dr. James Anderson, who shows that the labour of a West India slave costs about thrice as much as it would cost if executed by a free man. Taking another case, he demonstrates that the labour of certain colliers in Scotland, who, till our own

“ times, were subjected to a mild kind of vassalage; regulated
 “ by law, was twice as dear as that of the free men who
 “ wrought other coal-mines in the the same country, and
 “ thrice as dear as common day labour.”

It is observed by Mr. Botham, “ It may be desirable to
 “ know that sugar, better and cheaper than in our Island,
 “ is produced in the East Indies by free labourers. China,
 “ Bengal, and Malabar produce quantities of sugar and
 “ spirits, but the most considerable estates are near Batavia.
 “ The proprietor is generally a rich Dutchman, who builds
 “ on it substantial works. He rents the estate off (of 300
 “ or more acres) to a Chinese, who superintends it, and
 “ re-lets it to free men in parcels of 50 or 60 acres, which
 “ they plant at so much per pecul (133½lb) of the sugar
 “ produced. The superintendant collects people to take
 “ off the crop. One set, with their carts and buffaloes, cut
 “ the canes, carry them to the mill, and grind them; a
 “ second set boils the sugar, and a third set clays and
 “ baskets it for the market; all at so much per pecul.
 “ Thus the renter knows what every pecul will cost
 “ him. He has no unnecessary expense; for when the
 “ crop is over, the last men go home; and for seven months
 “ in the year, the cane-planters only remain, preparing the
 “ next crop. By dividing the labour, it is cheaper and
 “ better done. *After spending two years in the West*
 “ *Indies*, I returned to the East in 1776, and conducted
 “ sugar-works in Bencoolen on similar principles with the
 “ Dutch. Having experienced the difference of labourers
 “ for profit and labourers from force, I can assert that the
 “ savings by the former are very considerable. By follow-
 “ ing as nearly as possible the East India mode, and con-
 “ solidating the distilleries, I do suppose *our sugar Islands*
 “ *might be better worked than they now are, by two-thirds,*
 “ *or indeed one-half, of the present force.* Let it be con-

“ considered how much labour is lost by overseeing the forced labourer, which is saved when he works for his own profit. *“ I have stated, with the strictest veracity, the plain matter of fact, that sugar-estates can be worked cheaper by free persons than slaves.”*

“ Marsden, in his history of Sumatra,” says Dr. Dickson, “ highly commends Mr. Botham’s management of the sugar-works at Bencoolen by free labourers, and says that the expenses, *particularly of the slaves*, frustrated many former attempts of the English to cultivate the sugar-cane profitably at that place.”

I think we might safely infer, from the preceding particulars, that, under ordinary circumstances, the labour of free men is cheaper than that of slaves ; but there are many other considerations which strongly confirm this conclusion.

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we should naturally expect that, in a state where slavery was allowed, land, *ceteris paribus*, would be most valuable in the districts where that system prevailed ; and that in two adjoining states, in the one of which slavery was allowed, and in the other prohibited, land would be least valuable in the latter ; but the contrary is notoriously the fact. In a late communication from America on this subject, from an intelligent observer, it is remarked : “ The system of slave cultivation, as practised in the United States of America, has likewise a most destructive effect on the soil of our country. The state of Maryland, though a slave state, has comparatively but few slaves in the upper or western part of it ; the land, in this upper district, is generally more broken by hills and stones, and is not so fertile as that on the southern and eastern parts. The latter has also the advantage of being situated upon the navigable rivers that flow into the Chesapeake Bay, and its produce can be conveyed to market at one-third of the average expense

“ of that from the upper parts of the state ; yet, with all
 “ these advantages of soil, situation, and climate, the land
 “ within the slave district will not, upon a general average,
 “ sell for half as much per acre as that in the upper dis-
 “ tricts, which is cultivated principally by free men. This
 “ fact may be also further and more strikingly illustrated
 “ by the comparative value of land within the states of
 “ Virginia and Pennsylvania, the one lying on the south,
 “ and the other on the north side of Maryland ; the one a
 “ slave, the other a free state. In Virginia, land of the
 “ same natural soil and local advantages, will not sell for
 “ one-third as high a price as the same description of land
 “ will command in Pennsylvania. This single, plain,
 “ incontrovertible fact speaks volumes upon the relative
 “ value of slave and free labour, and it is presumed renders
 “ any further illustration unnecessary.”

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we might fairly infer that, in a state in which slavery was allowed, free labour would be reduced by competition to a level with the labour of slaves, and not slave labour to a level with the labour of freemen ; and that in two adjoining states, in the one of which slavery was allowed, and in the other prohibited, labour would be highest, *ceteris paribus*, in that in which slavery was proscribed. But experience proves the reverse.—Storch observes, that those who hire slaves in Russia, are obliged to pay more than they who hire free men, “ Unless they live in a place where the com-
 “ petition of free labourers reduces to a level the hire of
 “ slaves and the wages of free labourers. The interior of
 “ Russia, and the capitals of that empire, furnish proofs of
 “ the truth of this observation. In the capital, the compe-
 “ tition of free labourers is the greatest, and although the
 “ wages of free labour are very high there, the hire of slaves
 “ is, notwithstanding, less than in the interior.” Thus it

appears, that in those parts of Russia, where free and slave labour are brought into competition, slave labour is only reduced to a level with free labour by sinking below the average rate which it maintains in the rest of the empire. When in Norfolk, Virginia, in the winter of 1820, I was told, that many slaves gave their masters two dollars, or nine shillings per week, for permission to work for themselves, and retain the surplus. I also found, that the common wages of slaves who are hired, were 20s 3d per week and their food, at the very time when flour was 4 dollars, or 18s, per barrel of 196lbs, and beef and mutton 3d to 4d per lb. Five days afterwards, in travelling through the rich agricultural districts of the free state of Pennsylvania, I found able-bodied white men willing to work for their food only. This, indeed, was in the winter months, and during a period of extraordinary pressure. I was told, however, that the average agricultural wages, in this free state, were 5 or 6 dollars per month, and food; while, in Norfolk, at the time I allude to, they were 18 dollars per month, and food. If it should be replied, that in the town of Norfolk, the price of slave labour was likely to be much higher than in the country, I would ask, why it is not so in the principal towns of Russia?

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we should naturally expect to find it employed in the cultivation of those articles in which extended competition had reduced profits to the lowest point. On the contrary, however, we find that slave labour is gradually exterminated when brought into competition with free labour, except where legislative protection, or peculiarity of soil and climate, establish such a monopoly as to admit of an expensive system of management. The cultivation of indigo by slaves in Carolina, has been abandoned, and the price of cotton reduced one-half, since these articles have had to compete

in the European markets with the productions of free labour; and notwithstanding a transportation of three times the distance, the West India planters declare that they shall be ruined, if sugar from the East Indies shall be admitted at the same duty as from the West.

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we might reasonably infer, that in proportion as the circumstances of the cultivators rendered economy indispensable, either from the difficulty of obtaining slaves, or other causes, the peculiar features of slavery would be more firmly established, and that every approach to freedom would be more sedulously shunned in the system of culture. But it is found, by the experience of both ancient and modern times, that nothing has tended more to assimilate the condition of the slave to that of the free labourer, or actually to effect his emancipation, than the necessity imposed by circumstances of adopting the most economical mode of cultivation.

“ In ancient times,” says Brougham, “ a great part of
 “ the population of the most polished states, was the
 “ personal property of the rest. These slaves were chiefly
 “ captives taken directly in war, or purchased from other
 “ warlike nations who had obtained them in this way. The
 “ constant hostilities which at that time divided the people
 “ of all countries, rendered this a very fruitful source
 “ of supply. During the rise of Athens and Rome,
 “ accordingly, when many foreign nations were by rapid
 “ steps conquered, and when others, still unsubdued, could
 “ sell the persons of their weaker neighbours, there was
 “ never any scarcity of men in the great slave-markets.
 “ The cruelty of the treatment which those unhappy men
 “ experienced, was proportioned to the ease with which they
 “ were procured; and we have already remarked how in-
 “ tolerable their lot was, among the very people who called
 “ every foreigner a barbarian. As war became less common,

“ and the arts of peace were more cultivated, this supply
 “ of slaves, of course, decreased; and when the Roman
 “ empire, tottering under its own weight, could think of
 “ nothing less than new conquests, there was an end of
 “ importing slaves. Accordingly, with the progress of real
 “ civilization, but still more with the diminution of wars
 “ and conquests, was introduced a milder system of domes-
 “ tic government, a greater humanity towards the slaves,
 “ and a more careful attention to breeding, when the stock
 “ could neither be kept up nor increased by other means.
 “ The laws added their sanction to this salutary change,
 “ which no laws could of themselves have wrought. The
 “ rights of slaves came to be recognized, the conduct of
 “ the master to be watched, and the practice of emanci-
 “ pation to be encouraged. By degrees, the slaves were
 “ incorporated with their masters, and formed part of the
 “ great free population, which was rather mixed with, than
 “ subdued by, the Goths.”

“ To the slavery of the ancients, succeeded the bondage
 “ and villenage of their Gothic conquerors. But the differ-
 “ ence between the two was marked and important. The
 “ Greek and Roman slaves were imported; the Gothic
 “ slaves were the peasantry of the country, and born on
 “ the spot, unless during the wars which accompanied the
 “ first inroads of the northern tribes. Accordingly, we
 “ find no parallel between the rigour of the ancient and of
 “ the modern slave system; and a foundation was laid in
 “ this essential difference, for a much more rapid improve-
 “ ment of the whole society, than took place in Greece or
 “ Rome, notwithstanding the superior refinement of the
 “ classic times. The slave first became attached to his
 “ master, not as his personal property, but as a part of his
 “ stock, and astricted to the soil, to use the language of the
 “ feudal ages. By degrees, the mutual interests of the lord

“ and his villeins, in the progress of national improvement,
 “ operated that important change in the state of manners,
 “ out of which the modern division of ranks, and the
 “ privileges of the lower orders, have arisen in the civilized
 “ quarters of the European community. First, the villein
 “ obtained the use of the land to which he had been
 “ annexed, and of the stock in which he had been com-
 “ prehended, on condition that a certain proportion (gene-
 “ rally one-half) of the produce should belong to the lord
 “ of the land, and proprietor of the stock. This great
 “ change, one of the most signal of those events which have
 “ laid the foundation of human improvement, by degrees
 “ too slow for the observation of historians, was owing
 “ entirely to the master discovering how much his interest
 “ was connected with the comfort of his slaves, how neces-
 “ sary it was to treat well that race whose toils supported
 “ the community in ease, and whose loss could not be
 “ repaired; how much more profitable it was to divide with
 “ the vassal the fruits of his free and strenuous exertions,
 “ than to monopolize the scanty produce of his compulsory
 “ toil. As soon as the right of property, and the secure
 “ enjoyment of the fruits of labour were extended to the
 “ vassals, the progress of improvement became constant and
 “ visible. The proportion of the fruits paid to the lord
 “ was diminished according to an indefinite standard; the
 “ peasant having been permitted to acquire property, pro-
 “ vided his own stock, and obtained the power of changing
 “ his residence, and commuting the nature of his service.
 “ By degrees, the rent came to be paid in money, according
 “ to the number of competitors for a farm; and they who
 “ could not farm land themselves, sold their labour to
 “ others for a certain price or maintenance. Lastly, the
 “ legislature secured the lease of the farmer with the same
 “ certainty that it secured the property of the landlord,

“and recognized the one as well as the other for useful and independent subjects.”

“A similar progress will most probably be the result of that abolition, the supposition of which we are indulging, (the abolition of the slave-trade.) That this idea is not chimerical, the consideration of a few facts, very little known in the history of America, may convince us.”

“The peculiar circumstances in the situation of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of South America, have already partially operated some of those happy effects which we may expect from the abolition of the slave-trade. The high price of the negroes in the Spanish settlements, partly from absurd regulations of trade, partly from the deficiency of the Spaniards in the practice of commerce and naval affairs, causes that want of hands which would prevail in its full extent, were the African trade stopt.” “From these circumstances, and partly, no doubt, from the peculiarly indolent character of the colonists in those parts, there has arisen a much better system of treatment than any other European colonies can boast of.” “Other views of interest have conspired to confirm and extend this system of mildness and equity towards the slaves; and the legislature has not failed, by every prudent interference, to assist the inferior race in the acquisition of rights and privileges.”

“Thus we meet with many very singular analogies between the history of the negroes in South America, and that of the villeins or bondsmen of Europe, in the earlier feudal times. All the gold and jewels in Brazil have, for many years, been collected according to the same plan that the feudal lords adopted for the purpose of quickening the industry of their vassals. The master supplies the slaves daily with a certain quantity of provisions and tools, and the slave is obliged to return a

“ certain quantity of gold or jewels, according to the nature
 “ of the ground. Every thing that remains over this ration,
 “ the negro keeps himself, were the balance to be millions.
 “ The gold-mines of Popayan and Choco, in Spanish
 “ America, are wrought in the very same way. The finest
 “ pearl fisheries in South America, those of Panama for
 “ example, are in the hands of negro tenants, as it were.
 “ These are bound to give a certain number of pearls every
 “ week. The negroes in the towns are allowed to hire
 “ themselves out to services of different kinds, on condition
 “ of returning to their masters a certain portion of their
 “ wages; the rest they may spend or hoard up for their
 “ own use.”

“ After a slave has, in any of these various ways,
 “ acquired property, he endeavours to purchase his free-
 “ dom. If the master is exorbitant in his demands, he
 “ may apply to a magistrate, who appoints sworn appraisers
 “ to fix the price at which the slave shall be allowed to buy
 “ his freedom. Even during his slavery, the behaviour of
 “ the master towards him is strictly watched; he may
 “ complain to the magistrate, and obtain redress, which
 “ generally consists in a decree, obliging the master to sell
 “ him at a certain rate. The consequences of all these
 “ laws and customs are extremely beneficial to the Spanish
 “ and Portuguese power in America. While the slaves
 “ are faithful and laborious, the free negroes are numerous,
 “ and in general much more quiet, useful, and industrious,
 “ than in the other colonies. Most of the artificers are of
 “ this class; and some of the best troops in the New
 “ World are composed entirely of negroes who, by their
 “ own labour and frugality, have acquired their liberty.”

“ It is hardly necessary to remark the striking analogy
 “ between the state of the Spanish and Portuguese negroes,
 “ and that of the European bondsmen, at a certain period

“ of their progress towards liberty. We find the same
 “ gentleness of treatment, the same protection from the
 “ laws, the same acknowledgments of rights, the same
 “ power of acquiring property, granted to the American
 “ slave, which prepared the complete emancipation of the
 “ European vassal. In some particulars, we observe another
 “ step of the same progress ; for in many parts, the negroes
 “ are precisely in the situation of the *coloni partiarii*, or
 “ metayers of the feudal times. In one respect, the negro
 “ is even in a more favourable situation : his *reddendo* (if
 “ I may use the expression) is fixed and definite ; all the
 “ overplus of his industry belongs to himself. The metayer
 “ was bound to divide every gain with his lord. The
 “ former, then, has a much stronger incentive to industry
 “ than the latter had. As this difference, however, arises,
 “ not from the progress of society, but from the nature of
 “ the returns themselves, easily concealed, and with diffi-
 “ culty procured : so, in some other respects, the negro is
 “ not in such favourable circumstances. But the great
 “ steps of the process of improvement are materially the
 “ same in both cases. Both have in common the great
 “ points of a bargain between the master and the slave ;
 “ privileges possessed by the slave independent of, nay, in
 “ opposition to his master ; the rights of property enjoyed
 “ by the slave, and the power of purchasing his freedom
 “ at a just price. This resemblance, in circumstances so
 “ important, may fairly be expected to render the progress
 “ of the two orders also similar. In the negro, as in the
 “ feudal system, we may look for the consequences of those
 “ great improvements in voluntary industry, more pro-
 “ ductive labour, and the mitigation and final abolition of
 “ slavery, when the slave shall have been gradually pre-
 “ pared to become a free subject.

“ Some of the good effects that have flowed from the
 “ national character, and peculiar circumstances of the
 “ Spanish and Portuguese, have been produced also in
 “ Dutch America, by that great competition of capitals,
 “ and those complicated difficulties, which lay the Dutch
 “ colonists under the necessity of attending to the smallest
 “ savings. If, from this source, combined with the facility
 “ of importation, has arisen a cruelty, unknown in other
 “ colonies, it may be doubted whether a compensation for
 “ the evil is not afforded by another effect of the same cir-
 “ cumstances:—the general introduction of task work,
 “ which the keen-sighted spirit of a necessary avarice has
 “ taught the planter of Dutch Guiana to view as the most
 “ profitable manner of working his slaves. Nothing, indeed,
 “ can conduce more immediately to the excitement of in-
 “ dustry, than the introduction of task-work. It seems
 “ the natural and easy transition from labour to industry;
 “ it forms in the mind of the slave those habits which are
 “ necessary for the character of the free man: it thus pre-
 “ pares him for enjoying, by a gradual change, those
 “ rights and privileges which belong to freedom.”

Of that modification of slavery under which the slave
 pays a tax or tribute to his master for permission to work
 on his own account, and to which such important effects are
 ascribed in the preceding extracts, Storch observes, “ This
 “ milder form of slavery has been adopted by different
 “ nations, but I doubt if it has existed any where to the
 “ same extent as in Russia. It is one of the most efficacious
 “ means of mitigating the fatal effects of slavery, and if
 “ there is ever any serious intention of abolishing it, this
 “ institution offers the most simple and least inconvenient
 “ means.” Now it would be difficult to find a stronger proof
 of the paralyzing influence of slavery on human exertion,

than the beneficial results which have followed the substitution in its place of a system so oppressive as even this mitigated form of bondage is represented to be by intelligent travellers. Mr. Heber remarks : " The peasants, belonging " to the nobles in Russia, have their abrock raised by their " means of getting money. It then becomes, not a rent of " land, but a downright tax upon their industry. Each " male peasant is obliged by law to labour three days in " each week for his proprietor. If the proprietor chooses " to employ him the other days, he may ; as for instance, " in a manufactory, but he then finds him in food and " clothing. If a slave exercises any trade which brings " him in more money than agricultural labour, he pays " a higher abrock. The peasants, employed as drivers at " the post-houses, pay an abrock out of the drink-money " they receive for being permitted to drive ; as otherwise, " the master might employ them in other less profitable " labour, on his own account. Sometimes they pay an " abrock for permission to beg." " In despite," says Dr. Clarke, " of all the pretended regulations made in favour " of the peasant, the tax he is called upon to pay, or the " labour he is compelled to bestow, depends wholly on the " caprice of his tyrant."

Task-work, another important, although earlier step in the progress from slavery to freedom, than a participation of earnings with a master, and another instance of the substitution of a cheaper for a more expensive system of cultivation, I found to be almost universal in the Atlantic States of America, where tobacco, cotton, and rice, are the staple articles of production ; but I never heard of an instance of it in the sugar plantations of Louisiana, where great profits render attention to economy less necessary.

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we might confidently presume that estates would be rendered less

productive by the emancipation of the slaves which cultivated them; but the presumption is contradicted by experience. "A few Polish nobles, (observes Coxe, in his travels in Poland,) of benevolent hearts, and enlightened understandings, have acted upon different principles, and have ventured upon the expedient of giving liberty to their vassals. The event has shown this to be no less judicious than humane, no less friendly to their own interests than to the happiness of the peasants; for it appears that in the districts in which the new arrangement has been introduced, the population of their villages has been considerably increased, and the revenues of their estates augmented in a triple proportion. The first noble who granted freedom to his peasants, was Zamoiski, formerly great chancellor, who, in 1761, enfranchised six villages, in the palatinate of Masovia." "These villages were, in 1777, visited by the author of the patriotic letters, from whom I received the following information:—On inspecting the parish registers of births, from 1750 to 1760, that is, during the ten years of slavery immediately preceding their enfranchisement, he found the births 434; in the first ten years of their freedom, from 1760 to 1770, 628; and from 1770 to the beginning of 1777, 585. By these extracts, it appeared that, during the

" First period, there were only 43 births	} each year.
" Second ditto 62 ditto	
" Third ditto 77 ditto	

" The revenues of the six villages, since their enfranchisement, have been augmented in a much greater proportion than their population. In the state of vassalage, Zamoiski was obliged, according to the custom of Poland, to build cottages and barns for his peasants, and to furnish them with food, horses, and ploughs, and every implement of

“agriculture: since their enfranchisement, they are become
 “so easy in their circumstances, as to provide themselves
 “with all these necessities at their own expense, and they
 “likewise cheerfully pay an annual rent in lieu of the
 “manual labour formerly exacted by their master. *By*
 “*these means, the receipts of this particular estate have*
 “*been nearly tripled.*”

“The example of Zamoiski has been followed by
 “Chreptowitz, vice-chancellor of Lithuania, and the Abbe
 “Bryzolowski, with similar success. Prince Stanislaus,
 “the king of Poland, has warmly patronized the plan of
 “giving liberty to the peasants. He has enfranchised four
 “villages not far from Warsaw, in which he has not only
 “emancipated the peasants from their slavery, but even
 “condescends to direct their affairs. He explained to me,
 “in the most satisfactory manner, that the grant of freedom
 “was no less advantageous to the lord than to the peasant,
 “provided the former is willing to superintend their con-
 “duct for a few years, and to put them in the way of
 “acting for themselves. He intends giving the public a
 “particular account of his arrangements, and will show
 “how much he has increased the value of his estate, as
 “well as the happiness of his peasants.”

It is stated in the supplement to the Report of the Privy Council, in reply to the 17th of the Queries from his Excellency Governor Parry, answered by the Hon. Joshua Steel, a planter of 1068 acres, in the parishes of St. John, St. Philip, and St. George, in the island of Barbadoes:
 “On a plantation of 288 slaves, in June 1780, viz. 90
 “men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, by the exertions
 “of an able and honest manager, there were only 15 births,
 “and no less than 57 deaths, in three years and three
 “months. An alteration was made in the mode of govern-
 “ing the slaves, the whips were taken from all the white

“servants, all arbitrary punishments were abolished, and
 “all offences were tried, and sentence passed by a negro
 “court. *In four years and three months*, under this
 “change of government, there were 44 births, and only 41
 “deaths, of which 10 deaths were of superannuated men
 “and women, and past labour, some above 80 years old.
 “*But in the same interval, the annual nett clearance of*
 “*the estate was above three times more than it had been*
 “*for ten years before.*”

If, then, it has appeared that we should be naturally led to infer, from the very constitution of human nature, that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of free men ; if it has appeared that such has been the opinion of the most eminent philosophers and enlightened travellers in different ages and countries ; if it has appeared that in a state where slavery is allowed, land is most valuable in those districts where the slave system prevails the least, notwithstanding great disadvantages of locality ; and that in adjoining states, with precisely the same soil and climate, in the one of which slavery is allowed, and in the other prohibited, land is most valuable in that state in which it is proscribed ; if it has appeared that slave labour has never been able to maintain its ground in competition with free labour, except where monopoly has secured high profits, or protecting duties afforded artificial support ; if it has appeared that, in every quarter of the globe, in proportion as the circumstances of the planter rendered attention to economy more indispensable, the harsher features of the slave-system have disappeared, and the condition of the slave has been gradually assimilated to that of the free labourer ; and if it has appeared that the mitigation of slavery has been found, by experience, to substitute the alacrity of voluntary labour, for the reluctance of compulsory toil ; and that emancipation has rendered the estates

on which it has taken place, greatly and rapidly more productive—I need not, I think, adduce additional proofs of the truth of the general position, that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of freemen.

And here, perhaps, I might safely leave the question ; yet, since your arguments, although of a general nature, and not restricted in their application to any peculiarity of circumstances or situation, seem to be derived from a somewhat partial view of the state of things in the West Indies, I shall proceed to examine, whether they afford any presumption that those islands present an exception to the general rule.

The comparison which you have made between the price of slave and free labour in the Antilles, appears to me by no means to warrant the conclusion you have drawn from it. Where the proportion of free labourers is extremely small, and labour is rendered degrading, or at least disreputable, by being confined principally to slaves, it is natural that the wages of free labour should be high ; and the question is not, whether at a given time and place, free or slave labour is the highest, but whether both are not higher than labour would be if all the community were free, and the principle of population were allowed to produce its natural effect on the price of labour, by maintaining the supply and competition of free labourers.

The other argument which you adduce, appears to me equally inconclusive. You observe, “ The very obstinacy “ of the planters in defending slavery, proves that it is an “ advantageous system for them.

And does man indeed, then, always act with an enlightened view to self-interest ? Is he uniformly vigilant to observe, and prompt to pursue his real good, however re-

mote, and requiring whatever sacrifices of present ease and gratification? Does prejudice or passion never blind or mislead him? nor habit render him slow to follow the dictates of his better judgment? The conversion of the slaves in the Colonies into free labourers, must be a very gradual work, demanding much patience and assiduity,—involving, possibly, some present risk, and requiring, it may be, for its complete success, the consentaneous efforts of the planters. And is such a task likely to be undertaken spontaneously, by the body of West India proprietors, whose concerns are managed by hired overseers? who consider their capital as invested, if not in a lottery, at least rather in a mercantile speculation, from which it is speedily to be disengaged, than in landed property, which is to descend with all its improvements, to their children's children? Is not the whole history of Colonial cultivation; is not the long and violent opposition of the planters to the abolition of the slave-trade; is not the reluctance they evinced to breed, instead of purchase, their slaves, when the latter plan was so notoriously the most expensive; is not their unwillingness to adopt the enlightened and profitable suggestions of their able counsellor and experienced associate, "The Professional Planter;" are not all these irrefragable proofs, that the practice of a planter, like that of other men, may be at variance with his interest—especially if in unison with his prejudices and his inclinations? If you should require additional evidence, I refer you to Brougham's Colonial Policy, where the fact is illustrated and explained, in language somewhat less courteous, indeed, than I am willing to adopt, but with the usual force and ability of that powerful writer.

Ganilh expresses his surprise, that an author so intelligent as yourself, and so well acquainted with the progress of society in Europe, should maintain the general position, that slave labour is cheaper than the labour of free men;

but he insinuates some doubt, whether the position may not be true when applied to the Colonies. He gives no reasons, however, for this idea, (for he scarcely offers it as an opinion,) which do not apply with the same force and propriety to the European system; and after a careful examination of his argument, I can really discern as little connexion between the principles he lays down, and the inference he seems disposed to deduce from them, as between the solemn and repeated declarations of France, that she has, *bona fide*, abolished the slave-trade, and her extension of this traffic, in the eyes of Europe, to the very utmost limits of which her capital will admit.

He observes: "When education has fitted man for one mode of existence, it is the height of imprudence suddenly to impart to the free man the ideas, the sentiments, and the tastes of the slave, and to the slave the ideas, the sentiments, and the tastes of the free man. *Although, therefore, it appears to me to have been demonstrated, that the labour of the free man is more advantageous than that of the slave*, perhaps it is equally true in the Colonial system as it exists, that the labour of the slave is more advantageous than that of the freeman." Now this argument against the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, applies equally to the abolition of slavery every-where; or rather, it is applicable only to *sudden* emancipation any-where. "By educating a man as a slave, you unfit him for freedom." Educate him then, as a freeman, and you unfit him for slavery. If the present generation of West India slaves are so tainted with the poison of slavery, that their moral constitutions cannot be regenerated, guard the next generation from the malignant influence of this vicious system, and you supply the islands with more productive labourers, agreeably to Ganilh's own admission.

If he had founded his exception of the Colonies from the operation of the general principle that the labour of freemen

is cheaper than that of slaves, on some radical distinction between the European and the African race, or between European and Colonial bondage, his argument would have been intelligible at least, if not conclusive. But he asserts, and I think most justly, "that the nature of man—white, yellow, " or black, is every-where the same; that the passions " exercise the same empire over each colour, and that all " equally obey the influence of moral and physical causes;" and with respect to any difference between European and Colonial bondage, he has not even alluded to the subject.

I admit, however, that some striking distinctions exist between them; distinctions so little creditable either to your country or my own, that I rejoice that my subject does not compel me to insist upon them. But while I gladly decline entering into those particulars, which place Negro Slavery in such humiliating contrast with European Bondage, I would guard sedulously against a delusion which has sometimes been industriously circulated, that in all their essential characteristics they differ little.

He must know little of the progress of society in Europe who can imagine, that its most degraded nation, in the darkest age, can supply a parallel to Negro Slavery as it exists in the British dominions in the 19th century. Where, in the records of European history, shall we find so loathsome and revolting a picture of human degradation as has been recently exhibited to the public, in a little pamphlet, entitled "Negro Slavery." Trusting, therefore, that I shall be in no danger of giving currency to a pernicious error, I rejoice that the argument, which I am pursuing, leads me to dwell less on those points in which the two systems differ, than on those in which they agree; and I trust it will appear, from their coincidence in the few particulars in which I shall institute a comparison between them, that so many of the principles from which slavery derives its malignant influence on human character are

common to both, as to justify the conclusion, that the happy results which have followed its abolition, in the one case, may reasonably be anticipated from it in the other.

If, in the West Indies and America, the wealth of a planter is estimated, not by the number of acres which he possesses, but by the number of his slaves, so it is in Europe. "Peasants belonging to individuals in Russia," says Coxe, "are the private property of the landholder, as much as implements of agriculture, or herds of cattle, and the value of an estate is estimated by the number of boors, and not by the number of acres." "The peasants of Poland," observes the same writer, "as in all feudal governments, are serfs or slaves; and the value of an estate is not estimated so much from its extent, as from the number of its peasants, who are transferred from one master to another, like so many herds of cattle.

If, in the West Indies and America, the slave can possess no property, except at the will of the master, who may choose to appropriate it, neither can he in many parts of Europe. "A man," says Storch, "who belongs to another man, can possess nothing of his own. What he produces, what he acquires, is produced and acquired for the master." "With regard to any capital," Coxe observes, "which the Russian peasants may have acquired by their industry, it may be seized, and there can be no redress, as, according to the old feudal law, which still exists, a slave cannot institute a process against his master. Hence it occasionally happens, that several peasants who have gained a large capital, cannot purchase their liberty for any sum, because they are subject, as long as they continue slaves, to be pillaged by their masters." "If the slave," says Dr. Clarke, "have sufficient ingenuity to gain money without his knowledge, it becomes a dangerous possession, and when discovered, it falls instantly into the hands of his lord." "The Russian boors," Tooke remarks, "have no civil

“ liberty ; their children belong not to them, but to their
 “ manorial lord, on whose will they depend ; they also,
 “ with their children, may be alienated, sold, and exchanged.
 “ They possess no immoveable property ; but they them-
 “ selves are treated sometimes as the moveable, sometimes
 “ as the immoveable property of another.”

If, in the West Indies and America, the power of the master has too frequently, in practice at least, extended to the life of the slave, such has often been the case in Europe. In the state of Mississippi, in 1820, a young planter was pointed out to me who had shot a runaway slave the preceding year, without the smallest notice being taken of it ; and a similar circumstance had occurred on a neighbouring plantation about the same time. “ In Western Europe,” says Storch, “ under the feudal system, the lot of the slaves was much harder than it is at present in Russia, since the right of the master extended to the life of the slave.” Coxe, in his travels in Poland, observes, “ The slavery of the Polish peasants is very ancient, and was always extremely rigorous ; until the time of Casimir the great, the lord could put his peasant to death with impunity, and when the latter had no children, considered himself as heir, and seized all his effects. In 1347, Casimir prescribed a fine for the murder of a peasant, and enacted, that in case of his decease without issue, his next heir should inherit.” Again, “ Peasants belonging to individuals, are at the absolute disposal of the master, and have scarcely any positive security either for their properties or their lives.—Until 1768, the statutes of Poland only exacted a fine from a lord who had killed his slave ; but in that year a decree was passed, by which the murder of a peasant was made a capital crime ; yet, as the law in question requires such an accumulation of evidence as is seldom to be obtained, it has more the appearance of protection than the reality.” The same

traveller observes, in his travels in Russia, "The lord, according to the ancient laws, had no power over the lives of the peasants, for if a slave was beat by order of his master, and died within the space of three days, the latter was guilty of murder, unless other reasons could be assigned for his demise. But was not this almost a mockery of justice? For surely a man might be terribly chastised without suffering death in *three days*, and if his vassal died within that space, and his master was a man of consequence, who was to bring him to justice?"

If, in the West Indies and America, marriage may be rendered impracticable, or its sacred ties torn asunder at the caprice of a master, so they may in Europe. "If the slave marries," says Storch, "it is because the master wishes or permits it; if he becomes a father, his children are born slaves as well as himself, his rights over his wife and children are subordinate to those which the master has over them. The slave is first a slave and then a man." "A peasant in the village of Celo Molody, near Moscow," observes Dr. Clarke, "who had been fortunate enough to scrape together a little wealth, wished to marry his daughter to a tradesman of the city, and offered 15 thousand roubles for her freedom—a most unusual price, and a much greater sum than persons of his class, situated as he was, will be found to possess. The tyrant took the ransom, and then told the father that both the girl and the money belonged to him; and therefore she must continue among the number of his slaves."

If the negroes (often active and energetic in their own country) are accused of indolence and apathy in the colonies, so are the lively Russians themselves when benumbed by slavery. "Other nations," says Dr. Clarke, "speak of Russian indolence, which is remarkable, as no people are naturally more lively, or more disposed to employ-

“ment. We may, perhaps, assign a cause for their inactivity. It is necessary. Can there exist excitement to labour, when it is certain that a tyrant will bereave industry of all its reward. The only property a Russian nobleman allows his slave to possess, is the food he cannot or will not eat himself. The bark of trees, chaff and other refuse, grass, and fish oil.” “With regard,” says Mr. Heber, “to the idleness of the lower classes in Russia, of which we have heard great complaints, it appears that when they have an interest in exertion, they by no means want industry. Great proprietors, who never raise their abrock, such as Count Sheremotoff, have very rich and prosperous peasants.” Again, “We observed a striking difference between the peasants of the crown, and those of individuals. The former are all in comparatively easy circumstances. Their abrock or rent is fixed, and as they are sure it will never be raised, they are more industrious.”

If the miseries of slavery in the Colonies, occasionally exasperate the slaves to desperation, and impel them to atrocities, which diffuse general apprehension and alarm, the same thing occurs in Russia. “In such instances,” observes Dr. Clarke, “the peasants take the law into their own hands, and assassinate their lords. To prevent this, the latter live in cities, remote from their own people, and altogether unmindful of all that concerns their slaves, except the tribute they are to pay.” Mr. Birkbeck relates the following anecdote of a planter, whom he met in a tavern in Virginia, and Dr. Clarke informs us that Russia can supply many parallel cases: “One gentleman,” says Mr. Birkbeck, “in a poor state of health, dared not encounter the rain, but was wretched at the thoughts of his family being for one night without his protection from his own slaves. He was suffering under the effects of a poisonous potion, administered by a negro who was

“his personal servant.” Dr. Clarke observes, “Many of the Russian nobles dare not venture near their own villages, through fear of the vengeance they have merited by their crimes.” It has occurred to myself, while in the state of Mississippi, to hear a well authenticated instance of a planter, who was compelling his slaves to work during a great part of the night, having been surprised asleep on the trunk of a tree, on which he had sat down to inspect them, shot with his own rifle, and then burnt in the ashes of their midnight fires; and Mr. Heber remarks, when in Russia, “The brother of a lady of our acquaintance, who had a great distillery, disappeared suddenly, and was pretty easily guessed to have been thrown into a boiling copper by his slaves.” He adds, “domestic servants (slaves) sometimes revenge themselves in a terrible manner.”

If travellers in America find the prisons in the slave-states filled with slaves, (as I did almost universally,) Mr. Heber remarks, “the prisons of Moscow and Kastroma were chiefly filled with runaway slaves, who were for the most part in irons.”

If, in passing*from a free into a slave-state in America, the change is instantly visible, even to the most careless eye, and nature herself seems to droop and sicken under the withering influence of slavery; the case is precisely the same in Europe. “The houses,” says Hall, in his travels in America, “universally shaded with large verandahs, seem to give notice of a southern climate: the huts round them, open to the elements, tell a less pleasing tale: they inform the traveller he has entered on a land of free men and slaves, and he beholds the scene marred with wretched dwellings, and wretched faces! And if the miserable condition of the negro leave him mind for reflection, he might laugh in his chains, to see how slavery has stricken the land with ugliness. The smiling villages and happy

“ population of the eastern and central states, give place to
 “ the splendid equipages of a few planters, and a wretched
 “ negro population, crawling among filthy hovels. For
 “ villages, after crossing the Susquehanna, there are scarcely
 “ any: there are only plantations—the very name speaks
 “ volumes!” My own personal observation enables me to
 subscribe to the fidelity of this picture, and from a recent
 communication which now lies before me from America, in
 reply to some inquiries transmitted to that country on the
 subject, I extract the following remarks: “ It is believed
 “ that no country can furnish a more full and clear oppor-
 “ tunity, than the United States of America do at this
 “ time, of attesting the effect of domestic slavery upon the
 “ industry and prosperity of a nation, and the relative
 “ value or profit of free and slave labour. The states of
 “ Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Ver-
 “ mont, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, are
 “ now cultivated almost entirely by free men. These states
 “ lie under a more rigorous climate, and possess a less
 “ fertile soil than the southern states, yet the prosperous
 “ situation of the country, the general comfort of the inha-
 “ bitants, and the improved condition of agriculture in
 “ those free states, compared with the slave states, are so
 “ obvious as to strike the traveller immediately, as he passes
 “ from the one district to the other. In the one, we find
 “ the whole country divided into small farms of from 100
 “ to 500 acres of land; on each of these tracts is generally
 “ erected a comfortable dwelling-house, with the necessary
 “ out-buildings, which are surrounded by well cultivated
 “ fields, in good order. In this district, the farmers, with
 “ but few exceptions, annually realize a small profit, by
 “ which they are enabled, as their children attain to man-
 “ hood, to make respectable provision for their establish-
 “ ment in business. In the other, we meet here and there,
 “ thinly scattered over a wretchedly cultivated district of

“country, a mansion-house, commonly in bad repair, surrounded by a number of dirty beggarly huts, crowded with ragged negroes and mulattoes, and the whole bearing the strongest marks of oppression and suffering, in which the half-starved neglected cattle, and other domestic animals, evidently participate. In other words, in those districts where the system of slavery is in full operation, the population is composed of the two extreme conditions of society, viz. the rich and the poor: and we meet with scarcely any of that middling class, which in all countries constitutes its most valuable members, and its most efficient strength.” It is observed of a slave district in Russia, in the “Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg,” “A few cities enjoy the pleasures of life, and exhibit palaces, because whole provinces lie desolate, or contain only wretched hovels, in which you would expect to find bears rather than men.” Coxe observes, in his journey from Stockholm to Carlsrona, “After having witnessed the slavery of the peasants in Russia and Poland, it was a pleasing satisfaction to find myself again among free men, in a kingdom where there is a more equal division of property, where there is no vassalage; where the lowest order enjoy a security of person and property, and where the advantages resulting from this right, are visible to the commonest observer. Norway is blessed with a particular code, called the ‘Norway Law.’ By this law—the palladium of Norway, the peasants are free; a few only excepted on certain noble estates near Frederickstadt. The benefits of the Norway code are so visible, as to the general effect on the happiness, and on the appearance of the peasants, that a traveller must be blind who does not instantly perceive the difference between the free peasants of Norway, and the enslaved vassals of Denmark, though both living under the same government.”

If, in the West Indies and America, you are often surprised and grieved by the strange assertion, that the condition of the slaves is as good as that of the labourers in England, as if mere animal sustenance were all that is necessary for the happiness of a rational and immortal being, the same proof is often afforded in Russia, of the degree in which familiarity with slavery may degrade man in the estimate of his fellow man, and render a feudal lord insensible to all that constitutes the essence of freedom. "There is," said one of the Russian princes to Dr. Clarke, addressing himself to him with an air of triumph, "more of the *reality* of slavery in England than in Russia."

And if, in the West Indies, there is a general prejudice against emancipation, and the idea of imparting to slaves the privileges of freedom is regarded as theoretical and visionary; similar errors and prejudices have prevailed, and perhaps still prevail in many parts of Europe. "The generality of the Polish nobles," observes Coxe, "are not inclined either to establish or give efficacy to any regulations in favour of the peasants, whom they consider as not entitled to the common rights of humanity!" "I was much surprised to find," says the same author, "upon inquiry, that no noble in Russia had franchised his vassals; but I may venture to predict that the time is not far distant, although an almost general prejudice seems to prevail, with respect to the incapacity of the peasants for receiving their liberty. And this, perhaps, may be true in the literal sense, as many of them, unless properly instructed, would scarcely be able to derive a solid advantage from their freedom, which might be considered by some as an exception from labour, and a permission for licentiousness. *A century ago, perhaps, no one in Russia would have ventured to debate the question, whether the peasants ought to be free.*"

And yet emancipation has proceeded rapidly in Europe, with what brilliant success, let Ganiilh himself inform us:

" The enfranchisement of the European population, has
 " been followed by tillage and cultivation, by the con-
 " version of cabins into cottages, hamlets into villages,
 " villages into towns, and towns into cities, by the establish-
 " ment of industry and commerce, of public order, and of
 " social power. The people who have first distinguished
 " themselves on the political theatre, are precisely those
 " who have first substituted the labour of the free man for
 " that of the slave; and other nations have only been able
 " to rise to the same prosperity by imitating their example.
 " In fine, the era of the economical and political regenera-
 " tion of modern Europe, is coincident with the abolition
 " of real and personal slavery."

And why may not the same glorious consequences follow
 the abolition of slavery in the West. Is it in Europe only
 that the mind can awaken from the torpor of slavery to
 life and intelligence? What shall we say, then, to the
 abolition of slavery, under British auspices, in Ceylon, in
 Java, in Sumatra, and in St. Helena? Or is it the African
 alone who imbibes a poison from the bitter cup which no
 antidote can cure, but which flows in the veins, and attaints
 the blood of his latest posterity? To you, Sir, it would
 be most unjust to impute such an opinion; but if it should
 be entertained by any of your countrymen, I would refer
 them to the experiment lately made in Columbia, where a
 great body of slaves have been emancipated, who are said
 " to have conducted themselves with a degree of indus-
 " try, sobriety, and order, highly creditable to them." I
 would refer them to the instance of the American slaves who
 joined the British standard in the last war, and who are
 now settled in Trinidad; where, under the protection of
 Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor, " they are earning
 " their subsistence," Mr. Wilberforce informs us, " with
 " so much industry and good conduct, as to have put
 " to silence all the calumnies which were first urged

“against the measure.” I would refer them to the testimony of a traveller, whose authority they will not dispute, the enterprising and philosophical Humboldt: “In all these excursions,” he observes, “we were agreeably surprised, not only at the progress of agriculture, but the increase of a free, laborious population, accustomed to toil, and too poor to rely on the assistance of slaves. White and black farmers had every-where separate establishments.” I love to dwell on these details of Colonial industry, because they prove to the inhabitants of Europe, what to the enlightened inhabitants of the Colonies has long ceased to be doubtful, that the Continent of Spanish America can produce Sugar and Indigo by free hands, and that the unhappy slaves are capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders.” I would refer them to the interesting and flourishing colony of Sierra Leone, that morning star of Africa, which beams so brightly on her sable brow. Or, lastly, I would refer them to a dark page in your Colonial history, where the refutation of their opinion is written in characters of fire.

Why, then, I would ask again, may not the same glorious consequences, which followed the abolition of slavery in Europe, follow its abolition in the West? “The abolition of the slave-trade,” says Brougham, *“assisted by subordinate arrangements, similar to those adopted in the ancient states, in the feudal kingdoms, and in the American Colonies, will most undoubtedly alter the whole face of things in the new world. The negroes, placed in almost the same circumstances with the bondmen of ancient Europe and the slaves of the classic times, will begin the same career of improvement. The society of the West Indies will no longer be that anomalous, defective, and disgusting monster of political existence, which we have so often been forced to contemplate in the course of this*

“ inquiry. The foundation of rapid improvement will be
 “ securely laid, both for the whites, the negroes, and the
 “ mixed race. A strong and compact political structure
 “ will arise, under the influence of a mild, civilized, and
 “ enlightened system. The vast Continent of Africa will
 “ keep pace with the quick improvement of the world
 “ which she has peopled; and in those regions where, as yet,
 “ only the war-whoop, the lash, and the cries of misery,
 “ have divided with the beasts the silence of the desert,
 “ our children, and the children of our slaves, may enjoy
 “ the delightful prospect of that benign and splendid reign,
 “ which is exercised by the arts, the sciences, and the
 “ virtues of modern Europe.”

Such, Sir, is the animating picture of the future fortunes of the Negro race. It is drawn, not by a Philanthropist in the shades of retirement, but by a Politician, who had meditated deeply on Colonial Policy, who brought to the consideration of this difficult topic, a mind second to few in capacity and vigour, and enriched with the most valuable information, commercial, political, and moral, on all topics connected with the interests of the Colonies. It is a sketch from the hand of a master, but of a master more eminent for the distinctness of his conceptions, and the bold lineaments of his prominent figures, than for the embellishments of a luxuriant fancy, or the warm colouring of romantic or impassioned feeling.

Nor was the expectation that the abolition of slavery, with all its beneficial results, would follow the abolition of the slave-trade, confined to Mr. Brougham. “Not I only,” says Mr. Wilberforce, “but all the chief advocates of the
 “ Abolition of the Slave-trade—Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord
 “ Grenville, Lord Grey, and every other—scrupled not to
 “ declare, from the very first, that their object was, by
 “ ameliorating regulations, and more especially by stopping
 “ that influx of un instructed savages, which furnished an

“ excuse for continuing a harsh system of management, and
 “ prevented masters from looking to their actual stock of
 “ slaves for keeping up their number, to be surely, though
 “ slowly, advancing towards the period when these unhappy
 “ beings might exchange their degraded state of slavery for
 “ that of a free and industrious peasantry.”

Mr. William Smith observes, “ That he scrupled not to
 “ avow and to maintain, nor had he ever, at any period of
 “ the Slave-trade controversy, scrupled to avow and to
 “ maintain, that the ultimate object of every friend of jus-
 “ tice and humanity in this country, must and ought to be,
 “ eventually to extend freedom to every individual within
 “ the dominions of Great Britain; that this freedom
 “ belonged to them of right; and that to withhold it be-
 “ yond the necessity of the case, and especially to with-
 “ hold it systematically, and in intention, *for ever*, was
 “ the very grossest injustice. He admitted, indeed, that
 “ *immediate* emancipation might be an injury, and not a
 “ benefit, to the slaves themselves: a period of preparation
 “ seemed to be necessary. The ground of this delay,
 “ however, was not the intermediate advantage to be de-
 “ rived from their labour, but a conviction of its expediency
 “ as it respected themselves. We had to compensate to
 “ these wretched beings for ages of injustice; we were
 “ bound by the strongest obligations to train up these sub-
 “ jects of our past injustice and tyranny, for an equal par-
 “ ticipation with ourselves in the blessings of liberty, and
 “ the protection of law; and by these considerations ought
 “ our measures to be strictly and conscientiously regulated.
 “ It was only while proceeding in such a course of action,
 “ adopted on principle and steadily pursued, that we could
 “ be justified in the retention of the negroes in slavery for
 “ a single hour; and he trusted that the eyes of all men,
 “ both here and in the Colonies, would be opened to this
 “ view of the subject, as their clear and indispensable duty.”

And why have so many years elapsed without any systematic approach to that happy change in the structure of Colonial society, which was so generally expected to follow the abolition of the Slave-trade? Is it not because the circumstances of the planters have never yet been such as to compel them to introduce those "subordinate arrangements," those "ameliorating regulations," adopted by the ancient states and feudal kingdoms of Europe? But the time is probably at hand, when necessity will force them to adopt the most economical mode of culture, however averse to change and innovation. The nation will not long consent to support a wasteful system of cultivation, at the expense of great national interests, and of an opening commerce with 60 to 100 millions of our fellow-subjects; and the slave labour of the West must fall, when brought into competition with the free labour of the East.

Deeply impressed with this conviction, I dwell with peculiar pleasure on every view of this important subject, which illustrates the connexion between the interest of the master and the slave. And having had a near view of slavery in the United States of America, having seen the dark aspect which it assumes, and the apprehensions which it diffuses, under a government pre-eminently free, in the bosom of an enlightened people, and in the sunshine of benign and liberal institutions, I am persuaded that such a system cannot exist long, in daily contrast with the enlightened policy of the new republics of the West, and under the brighter light which the diffusion of the gospel is shedding over the globe. I rejoice, therefore, in the conclusion, that the same measures—the mitigation and gradual abolition of slavery,—which are best calculated to avert a crisis which it is impossible to contemplate without dismay; are precisely those which, it would appear from the preceding pages, are most adapted to promote the immediate interests of the planters, by diminishing the expenses, and increasing the produce of their estates.

That the removal of the monopoly which they at present enjoy, will enhance the distress of the West India planters, it is impossible to doubt ; and the distress of so numerous a body, comprising some of the most enlightened and estimable members of the community, deserves a serious and dispassionate consideration. That sympathy is unnatural, which is excited only for sufferers at a distance, and that sensibility defective which can feel only for the slave. But it is the part of an enlightened Legislator, when endeavouring to relieve one class of the community, to guard against the injustice of transferring the burden to another ; and to require from those who solicit his interference, not only that they make out a strong case of distress, but that they prove that they are vigorously pursuing every means within their own power, to extricate themselves from the difficulties of their situation.

It is on these grounds, and not on any vague idea that Parliament is pledged to support them, that the West Indians should rest their claims. Even with respect to the absolute prohibition of a trade which Parliament had encouraged, Mr. Pitt repelled the idea of the Legislature being restrained by a reference to the past, from exercising its free discretion with regard to the future. With how much greater warmth would he have rejected such an assumption, in the case of a protecting duty, which encourages a system of cultivation unnecessarily expensive, which acts like an oppressive tax on the export of our manufactures, and which operates with a most malignant and widely extended influence on the industry, energy, and resources of our Indian Empire. He observes, “ It is chiefly on the “ presumed ground of our being bound by a parliamentary “ sanction, heretofore given to the African slave-trade, that “ this argument against the abolition is rested. Is there “ any one regulation of any part of our commerce, which, “ if this argument be valid, may not equally be objected to,

“on the ground of its affecting some man’s patrimony,
 “some man’s property, or some man’s expectations. Let
 “it never be forgotten, that the argument I am canvassing
 “would be just as strong if the possession affected were
 “small, and the possessors humble; for on every principle
 “of justice, the property of every single individual, or
 “number of individuals, is as sacred as that of the great
 “body of West Indians. It is scarcely possible to lay a
 “duty on any one article which may not, when first im-
 “posed, be said in some way to affect the property of
 “individuals, and even of some entire classes of the com-
 “munity. If the laws respecting the slave-trade imply
 “a contract for its perpetual continuance, I will venture
 “to say there does not pass a year without some act
 “equally pledging the faith of Parliament, and the perpe-
 “tuating some other branch of commerce.”

It is not then on the plea of a parliamentary pledge, but
 simply on the grounds of the extent of their distress, and
 their inability to relieve themselves, that the West India
 planters should found their claims for support.

But this inability, however real, will perpetually be called
 in question, until they have introduced every practicable
 improvement into their system of cultivation. When they
 have relieved that system from its superfluous machinery,
 and have made arrangements for the gradual elevation of
 their slaves to the condition of free labourers, they will
 have prepared themselves to come before Parliament with
 a better case; and will have laid the foundation for such
 a change in the structure of Colonial society, as will ulti-
 mately contribute greatly to their prosperity, and will
 exhibit in our West India Islands, another happy illus-
 tration of the truth of the position, that the labour of
 free men is cheaper than the labour of slaves.

APPENDIX.

THE Honourable Joshua Steele, whose communications have been referred to in the preceding letter, and form so valuable a part of Dr. Dickson's work, was a very intelligent gentleman, of large West India property, who, previous to visiting his estates in Barbadoes, lived many years in London, in habits of intimacy with persons of rank and character. He was Vice-president of the London Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, and was supposed to be one of the founders of the Dublin Society. He went to Barbadoes late in life, where he was a member of the Council, and officiated some time as Chief Justice. He was also the Founder of the Barbadoes Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, and President, till it had acquired some strength, when the Governor became President, and Mr. Steele Vice-president. He arrived in Barbadoes in 1780. The Society was founded in 1781, and in 1787 and 1788, "he contrived to give " in the Barbadoes Gazette, (by his account of several conversations,) faithful copies of the material part of the manuscript " minutes of the proceedings of the Society in their Committees," under the signature of Philo Xylon.

In 1790, about 10 years after his arrival in Barbadoes, he writes to Dr. Dickson, who had also been a resident in that island as private secretary to Governor Hay: "Upon observing " all this," (the abuses which still continued on his plantation, after his attempts to correct them in the ordinary way,) "I re-

“ solved to make a further experiment, in order to try whether
 “ I could not obtain the labour of my negroes by *voluntary*
 “ means, instead of the old method—by *violence*, and that in
 “ such a way as should be proof against the insidious insinuations
 “ of my superintendant; when, for a small pecuniary reward,
 “ over and above their usual allowances, the poorest, feeblest,
 “ and by character the most indolent negroes in the whole gang,
 “ cheerfully performed the holing of my land for canes, (generally
 “ said to be the most laborious work,) for less than a fourth part
 “ of the stated price paid to the undertakers for holing. Of this
 “ there is a pretty exact account given in Philo Xylon’s eighth
 “ letter. I repeated the like experiment the following year with
 “ equal success, and on the 18th Nov. 1789, I gave also my
 “ slaves tenements of land, and pecuniary wages, by the hour,
 “ the day, or the week, for their labour and services, nearly
 “ according to the plan described in Philo Xylon’s ninth letter,
 “ and soon after dismissed my superintendant.” The account to
 which he alludes in Philo Xylon’s eighth letter, is the follow-
 ing:—“ A planter offered a premium of two-pence halfpenny a
 “ day, or a pistreen per week, with the usual allowance to
 “ holers, of a dram with molasses, to any twenty-five of his
 “ negroes, men and women, who would undertake to hole for
 “ canes, an acre per day, at about ninety-six and half holes for
 “ each negro to the acre. The whole gang were ready to
 “ undertake it, but only fifty of the volunteers were accepted,
 “ and many among them were those, who, on much lighter
 “ occasions, had usually pleaded infirmity and inability. But
 “ the ground having been moist, they holed twelve acres within
 “ six days, with great ease: having had an hour, more or less,
 “ every evening, to spare; and the like experiment was repeated
 “ with the same success. More experiments, with such pre-
 “ miums, on weeding and deep hoeing, were made by *task-work*
 “ per acre, and all succeeded in like manner, their premiums
 “ being all perpetually paid them in proportion to their perform-
 “ ance. But afterwards, some of the same people being put
 “ (without premium) to weed on a loose uncultivated soil in the

" common manner, eighteen negroes did not do as much, in a
 " given time, as six had performed of the like sort of work, a few
 " days before, with the premium of the two-pence halfpenny.

" But these heterodox experiments did not pass without
 " censure. However, the plain answer is, that by the last
 " experiment, where eighteen negroes, under the whip, did
 " not do as much as six with the premium, the planter was
 " clearly convinced that saving time, by doing in *one day* as
 " much as would otherwise require *three days*, was worth more
 " than double the premium, the timely effects on vegetation
 " being critical. And moreover, it was remarkable, that during
 " the operations under the premium, there were no pretended
 " disorders, no crowding to the sick-house. But according to
 " the vulgar mode of governing negro-slaves, they feel only the
 " desponding fear of punishment for doing less than they ought,
 " without being sensible that the settled allowance of food and
 " clothing is given, and should be accepted as a reward for doing
 " work: while, in task-work, the expectation of winning the
 " reward, and the fear of losing it, have a double operation on
 " their minds to exert their endeavours."

In Philo Xylon's ninth letter, to which he alludes, Mr. Steele
 shows, that by giving his slaves tenements of land, and pecuniary
 wages, the expense of employing the labour of three hundred
 copyhold bond slaves, including the value of the land given to
 them, is only £1283 15s 0d

While that of three hundred slaves under the

ordinary management, is at £5 14s each . . 1710 0 0

Making a saving of currency	426	5	0
Or sterling	334	9	3

Dr. Dickson, who had carefully examined the subject of slave
 labour, and who has published some excellent Tables of Labour
 Annuities, the result of practical experience and scientific
 investigation, considers the preceding estimates of saving and
 profit to be stated with great moderation. He notices them in

many parts of his work, and among others in the following passage :

“ Thus, then, all things conspire to prove, that the returns
 “ of slave labour on sugar plantations have been, and are still
 “ very rapidly declining. The ground on which the planter
 “ stands has never been firm, and it is now *fast* sinking under
 “ his feet. To save himself from the opening gulph, he *must*
 “ *reduce the enormous expense of producing his article*, by some
 “ such means as those recommended by the success of Mr.
 “ Steele, and other wise economists in sugar cultivation. He
 “ must call forth the latent vigour of his slaves by rewards,
 “ and abate, in every possible way, the waste, theft, idleness,
 “ desertion, pretended sickness, and secret reluctance and oppo-
 “ sition, which must *always, more or less, diminish the labour of*
 “ *slaves*. ‘ For a slave,’ as Adam Smith observes, ‘ can have no
 “ other interest than to eat and waste as much, and work as
 “ little as possible.”

“ We might be thought to refine too much, were we to attempt
 “ to calculate the diminution of labour caused by these *moral*
 “ *evils* of slavery. And beside, we could offer no estimate
 “ half so satisfactory as that given above, of the actual saving
 “ by the system recommended; which saving is nothing else
 “ than the *amount of what is lost, by attempting the impossibility*
 “ *of curing the moral incapacity of slaves by force instead of*
 “ *reward.*”

SIERRA LEONE.

This Colony may be said to owe its origin to the liberality and benevolent exertions of the celebrated GRANVILLE SHARP. At the time when the decision of Lord Mansfield, in the memorable case of the Negro, Somerset, had established the axiom, that “ *as soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground, he becomes free,*” there were many negroes in London who had been brought over by their masters. As a large proportion of these had no longer owners to support them, nor any parish from which they could claim relief, they fell

into great distress, and resorted in crowds to their patron, Granville Sharp, for support.

But his means were quite inadequate to maintain them all, even if such a plan had been desirable for the objects of his compassion, and " he formed a scheme for their future " permanent support. He determined upon sending them " to some spot in Africa, the general land of their ancestors, where, when they were once landed under a proper " leader, and with provisions for a time, and proper " implements of husbandry, they might, with but moderate " industry, provide for themselves." " Just at this time, Mr. " Smeathman, who had lived for some years at the foot of the " Sierra Leone mountains, and who knew the climate and " nature of the soil and productions there, and who had " formed a plan for colonizing those parts, was in London, " inviting adventurers, but particularly the black poor, to " accompany him on his return to his ancient abode." Measures for this purpose were concerted by him and Granville Sharp; but Mr. Smeathman, who was to have conducted the black colonists, died before they sailed; and the care, and for some time the expense, of this bold enterprize, devolved entirely on Mr. Sharp. Nothing could be more discouraging than the calamities which befel the undertaking from its very outset. Of 400 black people who left the Thames on the 22nd Feb. 1787, under convoy of his majesty's sloop of war *Nautilus*, not more than 130 (who were afterwards reduced to 40) remained alive and in one body at the end of the rainy season, into which they had been thrown by the death of Mr. Smeathman, notwithstanding Mr. Sharp's strenuous efforts to avoid it. Disaster followed disaster, Famine, disease, discontent, desertion, succeeded each other with frightful rapidity, till the year 1789, when the colony, again in a state of improvement, was almost annihilated by a hostile attack from a neighbouring chief. About that time, a company was established in England for the purpose of carrying forward the benevolent views of the founder, which afterwards obtained a royal charter of incor-

poration. In 1792, about 1100 negroes arrived from Nova Scotia, under the command of Lieutenant Clarkson. These were negroes who had been induced to enlist in the British army during the American war, by an offer of freedom, and "who were afterwards carried to Nova Scotia, under a promise "of regular allotments of land, which promise had unfortunately not been fulfilled;" the climate being unfavourable to them, they solicited and obtained permission to join the colony at Sierra Leone. In the year 1800, their numbers were increased by the arrival of 550 Maroons, who, having risen against the colonists of Jamaica, and been induced, by the terror of blood-hounds, to surrender, were carried to Nova Scotia, and subsequently to Sierra Leone. Of such elements (to which have since been added the negroes liberated from the holds of captured slave-ships) was the colony of Sierra Leone composed; and nothing less than the extraordinary energy, fortitude, and perseverance of our illustrious countryman, could have saved it from the destruction with which it was so often menaced. "Certainly, without him, the Sierra Leone Company "would not have been formed, and had he not supported the "colony, when it so often hung, as it were, by a thread, till the "formation of this Company, all had been lost." This is not the place to follow it through all the vicissitudes of its subsequent history; but as its actual condition is little known, I will give a few extracts from various authorities, which will enable the judicious reader to form his own opinion, how far it is likely to realize the expectation of its illustrious founder, and to be "one day the means of spreading the benefits of civilization "and Christianity through a considerable part of the vast continent of Africa."

On the 31st Oct. 1787, Granville Sharp writes, "I have had "but melancholy accounts of my poor little ill-thriven swarthy "daughter, the unfortunate colony of Sierra Leone.

The following was the population in 1820 and 1822, as given in the Missionary Register of Dec. 1822.

	July 8, 1820.	Jan. 1, 1822.
" Europeans	120	128
" Maroons	594	601
" Nova Scotians	730	722
" West Indians and Americans	—	85
" Natives	1046	3526
" Liberated Africans	8076	7969
" Disbanded Soldiers	1216	1103
" Kroomen	727	947
" Totals	<u>12,509</u>	<u>15,081</u>

" The chief increase is apparently in the class of natives, while that of liberated Africans seems to be somewhat diminished; but this is, in part, occasioned by a difference of arrangement in the two returns. The large number of natives, in the native villages of the Peninsula, amounting in the last return to 1925, would have been divided, according to the arrangement in the return of 1820—into natives, properly so called; that is, as we conceive, the Aborigines of the Peninsula; and liberated Africans, living in villages, but not under a superintendant. In the return of 1820, this distinction was made; and then the whole number, amounting to 1468, divided into 400 of the first class, and 1068 of the second. Both classes being called 'natives' in the last return, the number of liberated Africans appears to have diminished; while it has, in fact, greatly increased, independently of the addition of 1590 since the date of the last return. We collect from these data, that the number of liberated Africans, of all descriptions, in the colony, on the 1st of August, was upward of ELEVEN THOUSAND.

" Still there is an increase of the class ranked as 'natives' in the last return, to the amount of nearly 1000; of these, about one-half are in Freetown, and the other half are chiefly

“ resident in the settlements of the liberated Africans. This augmentation is derived, we conceive, from the influx of the people bordering on the colony ; and is a gratifying indication of the growth of mutual confidence between the colony and its neighbours.”

IMPORTS.		Invoice Amount.	
“ From Dec. 10, 1816, to Nov. 22, 1817 . .	£75,716	6	0½
Nov. 23, 1817, to Dec. 10, 1818 . .	94,799	14	5½
Dec. 11, 1818, to Dec. 31, 1819 . .	80,863	6	11¾
Jan. 1, 1820, to Dec. 31, 1820 . .	66,725	9	4
Jan. 1, 1821, to Dec. 31, 1821 . .	105,060	15	10

EXPORTS.		No. of Vessels employed in exporting.	Tonnage.	Logs of Afri- can Timber exported.	Tons of Rice exported.
“From Jan. 1, to Dec. 31, 1817. . 17 . .		2990 . .	— . .	—	
Jan. 1, to Dec. 31, 1818. . 22 . .		3659 . .	1517 . .	278	
Jan. 1, to Dec. 31, 1819. . 27 . .		5875 . .	2556 . .	1228	
Jan. 1, to Dec. 31, 1821. . 26 . .		6805 . .	4736 . .	42	

“ Comparative Statement of Duties collected in the colony of Sierra Leone for the undermentioned periods.

“ From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1817	£3086	3	7
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1818	5124	1	3
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1819	4656	2	0¾
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1820	6153	5	6
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1821	6318	4	7

J. REFFELL,

Acting Collector and Naval Officer.”

At the moment I am writing, there are at least 3 vessels on the birth in this Port, for Sierra Leone.

Extracts from Commodore Sir GEORGE COLLIER'S Second Annual Report upon the Settlements on the Coast of Africa, relative to the Colony of Sierra Leone.

“ Indeed, the colony of Sierra Leone has been so differently represented, so much has been urged against its rising pros-

“perity, and proposals said to have been made for its abandonment, that I consider myself (as an impartial person) the one from whom opinions and remarks may be expected. The climate of Sierra Leone is, like all other tropical climates, divided into a sickly season, and one not positively so, for it may be too much to speak of Sierra Leone as ever absolutely healthful.” He then proceeds to speak of various topics, particularly connected with the nature of his survey. Alluding to the schools and churches, he says, “The manner in which the public schools are here conducted, reflects the greatest credit upon those concerned in their prosperity, and the improvement made by the scholars, proves the aptitude of the African, if moderate pains be taken to instruct him. I have attended places of public worship in every quarter of the globe, and I do most conscientiously declare, never did I witness the ceremonies of religion more piously performed or more devoutly attended to, than in Sierra Leone.”

In his report, dated 27th Dec. he observes, “The public buildings have not advanced so rapidly as I believe had been expected; but it is, nevertheless, gratifying to observe, that the roads in the neighbourhood of Freetown, and those in the mountains, have been much improved, and that the bridges have been constructed of more durable materials than heretofore. Upon the whole, Sierra Leone may be said to be improving, and if the encouragement hitherto shown, shall be continued to the British merchant, no reason appears to me why this colony shall not, in the course of time, amply repay the anxiety, and care, and expense so liberally bestowed by the mother country. Every year, some new prospect opens to the merchant. *An intercourse with the interior of Africa now fairly promises ultimate success, and which must be productive of benefit to Great Britain, and it may even be expected, that some years hence, caravans shall resort to the neighbourhood of Porto Logo, (on a branch of the Sierra Leone,) to convey articles of British manufacture into the very interior of the continent of Africa.*”

Extract of a Letter from Captain H. TURNER, dated the 7th March, 1822.

" I visited the colony of Sierra Leone in the year 1817. My stay among the recaptured negroes in the mountains then was very short, but sufficient to ascertain they were involved in heathen darkness and barbarity.

" Having again visited them in December 1821, I am able, in some measure, to estimate the great change since the former period, both in a moral and religious point of view, through the exertions of your missionaries, and the blessings of Almighty God upon their labours, without which all would have been ineffectual.

" Regent's Town, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Johnson, was then but thinly inhabited.

" Regent's Town now wears the aspect of a well-peopled village in our happy land ; its inhabitants civilized, industrious, honest, and neatly clothed. The ground allotted to each family is cultivated, each lot being distinctly marked out. I have frequently ascended an eminence near the town to behold the pleasing scene on the Sabbath-day—hundreds pressing on to the house of God, at the sound of the bell, hungering after the bread of life. Nothing but sickness prevents their attendance now. What a lesson does this teach many in Britain, who count the Sabbath a burden, and either spend it in indolence and sloth, or in visiting and riot !"

Extract of a Letter from EDWARD FITZGERALD, Esq. Chief Justice of the Colony of Sierra Leone, dated the 3rd May, 1821.

After giving an interesting and detailed account of the various places of public worship within the colony, the Chief Justice thus proceeds: " In a general view, the observances which have been noticed, will probably be thought sufficient to create a favourable impression on the state of religious feeling and demeanour in the settlement of Freetown. The Lord's day is more decorously kept than it is in most other

“ places. The shops are all shut ; there is no such thing as
 “ buying and selling. The Christian part of the people attend
 “ worship at the places which they have respectively chosen ;
 “ and all the congregations are alike remarkable for uniform
 “ and respectful attention. Throughout the streets, correspond-
 “ ing propriety is noticed ; intoxication, in the gross and dis-
 “ gusting form in which it is so commonly seen on the Lord’s
 “ day in England, is of very rare occurrence here, with the
 “ painful exception of European seamen, whose conduct and
 “ language in their frequent inebriations, on that day especially,
 “ are of most depraving example. It is not to be understood
 “ that the day passes in *perfect* sobriety ; among the inhabitants
 “ in general, it is the decency and not the abstinence that makes
 “ the distinction. Excesses are committed, and are generally
 “ brought under the animadversion of the magistrates on the
 “ Monday, in consequence of the quarrels occasioned by them ;
 “ but these quarrels are almost universally of a trifling nature.
 “ There is not any thing in the circumstances collectively to
 “ detract from the credit that has been taken.”

*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. H. DURING, Superintendent
 of Gloucester Town, Sierra Leone, dated 28th Dec. 1821.*

“ The reception which his Excellency Sir C. M’Carthy met
 “ with among the people under our care, has indeed been feebly
 “ stated in the Gazette, as the editor also honestly owns.
 “ The Captain, in whose vessel the Governor had come, was
 “ struck with astonishment. He (the Captain) had seen much
 “ of the negroes, having been in Jamaica, and asked what time
 “ the settlement had been formed ? When told in the beginning
 “ of 1817, he smiled, and said to the Governor, Sir Charles
 “ M’Carthy, ‘if I knew not your Excellency to be a man of
 “ honour, I should think myself greatly imposed on ; and I
 “ must candidly confess I can hardly believe it now !’ His
 “ Excellency then pointed out to him the way he first came to
 “ this place, and the old trees lying about the town, cut down
 “ three or four years ago, as evidences of the truth ; ‘ but,’ said

“ the Captain, ‘ what sort of people were they with which it
 “ was commenced ? ’ I pointed out to him some who were sent
 “ here in the beginning of November, that, looking at their
 “ emaciated state of body, he might form some idea of those
 “ with whom I began, and who only then were sixty-two in
 “ number, twenty of whom died, ere scarcely a month had
 “ elapsed ! He then inquired what method we had pursued to
 “ bring them to such a state in so short a time ? ‘ No other,’
 “ said his Excellency, ‘ than the truths of Christianity, which
 “ these gentlemen were sent by the Church Missionary Society
 “ to propagate : by this alone they have ruled them, and have
 “ raised them to a common level with other civilized nations ;
 “ and believe me,’ added his Excellency, ‘ if you admit Christian
 “ teachers into your island, you soon will find them become
 “ affectionate and faithful servants to you ! ’

“ Things, as they now appear, humanly speaking, never
 “ wore so bright and pleasing an aspect ; for there were indi-
 “ viduals, and are now at this moment, who always were
 “ endeavouring to undermine the credit of the Society, as well
 “ as that of the Colonial Government, as it respects the captured
 “ negroes ; but sure it is, there never was such an opportunity
 “ for observation—never were the prejudices more effectually
 “ removed from the minds of many European colonists, and
 “ never had the Society gained more credit in the colony, even
 “ in the minds of those individuals alluded to, than through the
 “ present events ; as you, I trust, will see in the Report of the
 “ Sierra Leone Association, in aid of the Church Missionary
 “ Society, the collections and contributions to which amount to
 “ nearly £200.”

Dr. MORSE, a well-known, respectable, and intelligent
 American author, thus describes the settlement, in his
 Universal Gazetteer : “ Sierra Leone, in 1809, contained
 “ 1500 persons, since which it has been flourishing, and is
 “ now the most important English colony in Africa, except
 “ the Cape of Good Hope, the number of inhabitants, in

“ 1818, amounting to 10,014, of whom only about 100 were
 “ Europeans. The population consists almost entirely of Africans
 “ from the holds of slave-ships, and who, when they were
 “ introduced into the colony, were at the lowest point of mental
 “ and moral depression. They now exhibit a very gratifying
 “ proof of the susceptibility of the African character for im-
 “ provement and civilization. From savages and gross idolaters,
 “ many of them have been converted into enterprising traders,
 “ skilful mechanics, and industrious farmers ; supporting them-
 “ selves and their families in comfort, and performing respect-
 “ ably, the social, and even religious duties. They discharge
 “ the duties of jurors, constables, and other officers, with much
 “ propriety, and are a fine example of a community of black
 “ men living as free men, enjoying the benefit of the British
 “ constitution, regularly attending public worship, and gradually
 “ improving, by means of schools and other institutions, in
 “ knowledge and civilization. This happy change has been
 “ effected by the blessing of God on the labours of English
 “ Missionaries. In 1819, the number of children in the schools
 “ at the various settlements, was 2014 ! ”

*Extracts from the Third Annual Report of the American Society
 for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States.*

“ What the Society propose to do with regard to colonizing,
 “ is to procure a suitable territory on the Coast of Africa, for
 “ such of the free people of colour as may choose to avail
 “ themselves of this asylum, and for such slaves as their
 “ proprietors may please to emancipate.

“ So far is this scheme from being impracticable, that one,
 “ resembling it in all respects, was accomplished by a private
 “ society in England more than 30 years ago.

“ In despite of every representation to the contrary, the
 “ colony of Sierra Leone boasts, at this moment, a greater de-
 “ gree of prosperity than distinguished any one of the British
 “ Colonies, now the United States of America, at the same

“ period after its first plantation. The population of Sierra Leone ; its commerce and navigation ; its churches, schools, and charitable institutions ; its towns and hamlets ; its edifices, public and private, surpass those of any one of these states, at any time within twenty-five years from its first settlement.”

It is for the reader to estimate the value of the preceding authorities, and to draw from them his own conclusions with regard to the present state and future prospects of Sierra Leone. It is for him also to decide how far the prosperity of a community, formed of such unpromising materials, may be regarded as an exemplification of what the Negro race may exhibit when rescued from slavery ; how far such a Colony of Africans, of many nations and languages, educated on their own shores, with civil rights, political privileges, and religious advantages, and in frequent communication with their countrymen from the interior, is calculated to civilize Africa ; how far it may be expected to send forth, through a thousand channels, those fertilizing streams which will clothe the moral deserts of that injured Continent with verdure and beauty.

FINIS.

LETTER

FROM J. B. SAY TO THE AUTHOR.

Monsieur,

J'ai reçu par M. le Baron de Stael, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire en m'adressant votre lettre imprimée. Je vous remercie de ce que l'une et l'autre contiennent, d'obligeant pour moi, et partage votre avis sur le fonds de la question. Vous avez rassemblé dans un petit espace, des faits et des argumens aux quels il ne me semble pas qu'on puisse résister, * * * *

* * * * *

Vous n'avez probablement lu qu'une des premières éditions de mon *Traité d'Economie Politique*; car dans les dernières j'ai beaucoup amendé ce que je disais du travail des esclaves; au point d'en venir à peu près à la même conclusion que vous; mais n'étant pas borné à une seule question et ne voulant pas grossir le livre je n'ai pu qu'effleurer le sujet. Je me rapproche encore plus de votre opinion dans les ouvrages que je prépare.

L'esclavage est incompatible avec une industrie un peu avancée; il touche à son terme chez tous les peuples d'origine Européenne, et comme l'inquiétude et l'intelligence de l'Europe finiront par envahir le monde, on peut affirmer qu'un jour l'esclavage aura cessé par tout.

J'ai communiqué votre estimable brochure à l'un de nos journaux littéraires, (le *Magazin Encyclopedique*,) où l'on m'a promis qu'on en rendrait compte. Ce sera probablement dans le cahier qui doit paraître le 1^{er} du mois de Mai. Peut être trouve t'on cet ouvrage periodique dans vos cabinets littéraires.

Agréé, Monsieur, l'expression de ma haute estime! en vous l'offrant je me trouverai heureux d'obtenir la votre. Agréé aussi l'assurance de mon très, sincère dévouement,

J. B. SAY.

(TRANSLATION.)

Sir,

I have received, from the Baron de Stael, the letter with which you did me the honour to accompany the printed letter you have addressed to me.

I thank you for the obliging expressions in both of them, and accord with your sentiments on all the main points of the question at issue. You have collected, in a small space, an accumulation of facts and arguments which it appears to me impossible to resist,

* * * * *

You have probably read only one of the first editions of my Treatise on Political Economy, as in the later ones I have materially corrected what I said with respect to the labour of slaves, so as to arrive nearly at the same conclusion as you; but not having confined myself to that particular subject, and being unwilling to swell my book, I was only able to advert to it slightly. I approach still nearer to your sentiments in the works which I am preparing.

Slavery is incompatible with productive industry, in a state of society moderately advanced. It is already verging towards its termination among all people of European origin; and as the restlessness and intelligence of Europe will ultimately pervade the globe, we may affirm that slavery will one day be extinguished every-where.

I have communicated your valuable pamphlet to one of our literary journals, (the Encyclopedical Magazine,) in which I have been promised that some account of it shall appear; it will probably be in the Number which will be published on the 1st of May. Perhaps this journal is to be met with in some of your literary institutions.

Accept the expression, &c. &c.

J. B. SAY

Paris, 25th March, 1823.

(5)

of Divinity Hall.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

Necessity of Improving the Condition

OF

THE SLAVES

IN THE BRITISH COLONIES,

WITH A VIEW TO THEIR ULTIMATE

EMANCIPATION;

AND ON THE PRACTICABILITY, THE SAFETY, AND THE
ADVANTAGES OF THE LATTER MEASURE.

Thomas

By T. CLARKSON, Esq.

Fourth Edition corrected.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS;

AND SOLD BY

J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY; AND J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL.

1824.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following sheets first appeared in a periodical work called *The Inquirer*. They are now republished with corrections and with some slight abridgement.

It is possible there may be some, who, having glanced over the Title Page of this little work, may be startled at the word *Emancipation*. I wish to inform such, that Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, an acute man, and a Friend to the Planters, *proposed this very measure to Parliament* in the year 1792. We see, then, that the word *Emancipation* cannot be charged with *Novelty*. It contains now *no new ideas*. It contains now nothing but what has been *thought practicable, and even desirable to be accomplished*. The *Emancipation* which I desire is such an *Emancipation* only, as I firmly believe to be compatible not only with the due subordination and happiness of the labourer, but with the permanent interests of his employer.

I wish also to say, in case any thing like an undue warmth of feeling on my part should be discovered in the course of the work, that I had no intention of being warm against the West Indians as a body. I know that there are many estimable men among them living in England, who deserve every desirable praise for having sent over instructions to their Agents in the West Indies from time to time in behalf of their wretched Slaves. And yet, alas! even these, *the Masters themselves, have not had influence enough to secure the fulfilment of their own instructions upon their own estates*; nor will they, *so long as the present system continues*. They will never be able to carry their meritorious designs into effect against *Prejudice, Law, and Custom*. If this be not so, how happens it that you cannot see the Slaves, belonging to such estimable men, *without marks of the whip upon their backs*? The truth is, that *so long as overseers, drivers, and others, are intrusted with the use of arbitrary power, and so long as Negro-evidence is invalid against the White oppressor, and so long as human nature continues to be what it is, no order from the Master for the better personal treatment of the Slave will or can be obeyed*. It is against the *system* then, and not against the West Indians as a body, that I am warm, should I be found so unintentionally, in the present work.

One word or two now on another part of the subject. A great noise will be made, no doubt, when the question of *Emancipation* comes to be agitated, about *the immense property at stake*, I mean the property of the Planters;—and others connected with them. This is all well. Their interests ought undoubtedly to be attended to. But I hope and trust, that, if property is to be attended to *on one side* of the question, it will be equally attended to *on the other*. This is but common justice. If you put into one scale *the gold and jewels* of the Planters, you are bound to put into the other *the liberty* of 800,000 of the African race; for every man's liberty is *his own property* by the laws of *Nature, Reason, Justice, and Religion*; and, if it be not so with our

West Indian Slaves, it is *only because* they have been, and continue to be, *deprived* of it *by force*. And here let us consider for a moment which of these two different sorts of property is of the greatest value. Let us suppose an English gentleman to be seized by ruffians on the banks of the Thames (and why not a *gentleman* when African *princes* have been so served?) and hurried away to a land (and Algiers is such a land for instance), where white persons are held as Slaves. Now this gentleman has not been used to severe labour (neither has the African in his own country); and being therefore unable, though he does his best, to please his master, he is roused to further exertion *by the whip*. Perhaps he takes this treatment indignantly. This only secures him a *severer punishment*. I say nothing of his being badly fed, or lodged, or clothed. If he should have a wife and daughters with him, how much more cruel would be his fate! to see the tender skins of these lacerated by the whip! to see them torn from him, with a knowledge, that they are going to be compelled to submit to the lust of an overseer! *and no redress!* "How long," says he, "is this frightful system which tears my body in pieces and excruciates my soul, which kills me by inches, and which involves my family in unspeakable misery and unmerited disgrace, to continue?"—"For ever," replies a voice suddenly: "for ever, as relates to your *own* life, and the life of *your wife and daughters*, and that of *all their posterity*." Now would not this gentleman give *all that he had left behind him* in England, and *all that he had in the world besides*, and *all that he had in prospect and expectancy*, to get out of this wretched state, though he foresaw that on his return to his own country he would be obliged to beg his bread for the remainder of his life? I am sure he would. I am sure he would *instantly* prefer his *liberty* to his *gold*. There would not be the *hesitation of a moment* as to the choice he would make. I hope then, that if the *argument of property* should be urged on *one side* of the question, the *argument of property (liberty)* will not be overlooked on the other, but that they will be fairly weighed, the one against the other, and that an allowance will be made as the scale shall preponderate on either side.

THOUGHTS,

&c.

I KNOW of no object, which humanity and justice, as well as public and private interest, are more intimately united to promote, than that of the mitigation of the slavery of the Negroes in our Colonies, with a view to their final emancipation. This object was taken into consideration when the Abolition of the slave trade was first practically thought of, and by the very persons who first publicly embarked in that cause in England; but it was at that time postponed, not on the ground *that Slavery was less cruel, or wicked, or impolitic, than the slave trade*, but for other reasons. It was supposed, that, by effecting the abolition of the slave trade, the axe would be laid to the root of the whole evil:—for what was more reasonable than to suppose, that, when masters could no longer obtain Slaves from Africa or elsewhere, they would be compelled, by a sort of inevitable necessity, or a fear of consequences, or by a sense of their own interest, *to take better care of those whom they might then have in their possession?* What was more reasonable, than to suppose that the different local legislatures, moved by the same considerations, *would immediately interfere*, without even the loss of a day, *and so alter and amend the laws* relative to the treatment of Slaves, as to enforce that as a public duty, which it would be thus the private interest of individuals to perform? Was it not also reasonable to suppose that a system of better treatment, thus begun by individuals, and enforced by law, would produce more willing as well as more able and valuable labourers than before; and that this effect, when once visible, would again lead both masters and legislators, on the score of interest, to treat their slaves still more like men; nay, at length to give them even privileges; and thus to elevate their condition by degrees, till at length it would be no difficult task, and no mighty transition, *to raise them to that most advantageous situation to both parties, the rank of Free Men?*

These were the effects, which the simple measure of the abolition of the slave trade was expected to produce by those who first espoused it, by Mr. Granville Sharp, and those who formed the London committee; and Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Mr. Wilberforce, and others of illustrious name, who brought the subject before Parliament. The question then is, how have these fond expectations been realized? or how many and which of these desirable effects have been produced? I may answer, that in our own West Indies, since the abolition of the slave trade, there may have been a somewhat *better individual* treatment of the slaves than before; that, independently of the common progress of humanity and liberal opinion, the circumstance of not being able to get new slaves as formerly, may have had its influence upon some of our planters; that it may have made some of them think more; that it may have put some of them more upon their guard; and that there may be therefore, upon the whole, more instances of good treatment of slaves by individuals in our Islands (though far from being as numerous as they ought to be) than at any former period.

But, alas! though the abolition of the slave trade may have produced a somewhat better individual treatment of the slaves, and this also to a somewhat greater extent than formerly, *not one of the other effects*, so anxiously looked for, has been realized. The condition of the slaves has not yet been materially improved by law. It is a remarkable, and indeed an almost incredible fact, *that efforts have not been made* by the legislative bodies in our Islands with *the real* intention of meeting the new and extraordinary event of the abolition of the slave trade. While indeed this measure was under discussion by the British Parliament, an attempt was made in several of our Islands to alter the old laws, with a view, as it was alleged, of providing better for the wants, and of more fully securing the personal protection, of the slaves; but it was afterwards discovered, that the promoters of this alteration never meant to carry it into effect, but intended, by making a show of these laws, *to deceive the people of England, and thus to prevent them from following up the great question of the abolition.* Mr. Clappeson, one of the evidences examined by the House of Commons, was in Jamaica when the Assembly passed their famous consolidated laws; and he told the House, that "he had often heard from people there, that it was passed because of the stir in England about the slave trade;" and he added, "that slaves continued to be as ill treated there *since the passing of that act as before.*" Mr. Cook, another of the evidences examined, was long resident in the same island; and, "though he lived there also *since the passing of the Act, he knew of no legal protection* which slaves had against injuries from their masters." Mr. Dalrymple was examined to the same point for Grenada. He was there

there in 1788, when the Act for that island was passed also, called "An Act for the better Protection and promoting the Increase and Population of Slaves." He told the House, that, "while he resided there, the proposal in the British Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade was a matter of general discussion, and that he believed, that this was the principal reason for passing it. He was of opinion, however, that this Act would prove ineffectual, because, as Negro evidence was not to be admitted, those, who chose to abuse their slaves, might still do it with impunity; and people who lived on terms of intimacy, would dislike the idea of becoming spies and informers against each other." We have the same account of the ameliorating Act of Dominica. "This Act," says Governor Prevost, "appears to have been considered from the day it was passed until this hour (viz. from 1797 to 1804) as a *political measure to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of the slaves.*" We are informed also on the same authority, that the clauses of this Act, which had given a promise of better days, "*had been wholly neglected.*" In short, the Acts passed in our different Islands for the alleged purpose of bettering the condition of the slaves have been shamefully neglected; and they are as much a nullity as if they had never existed.

And as our planters have done nothing yet effectively by law for ameliorating the condition of their slaves, so they have done nothing, or worse than nothing, with a view to their *emancipation*. Indeed it is plain they never thought of taking a single step with that view; for emancipation implies a *preparation* of the persons who are to be the subjects of so great a change. It implies a previous alteration of treatment for the better, and a previous alteration of customs and even of circumstances, no one of which can however be really and truly effected without a *previous change of the laws*. In fact, a progressively better treatment *by law* must have been settled as a preparatory and absolutely necessary work, *had emancipation been intended*. But as we have never heard of the introduction of any new laws, with a view of producing this effect, in any of our colonies, we have an evidence, almost as clear as the sun at noon-day, that our planters have entertained no notion of altering the condition of their Negroes, though fifteen years have elapsed since the abolition of the slave trade.

But if the abolition of the slave trade has not produced the effects which the abolitionists anticipated, it would appear to be their duty to resume their labours: for even if there should be upon the whole a somewhat better treatment of the slaves by their masters individually, yet it is true, that not only many of the former continue to be ill-treated by the latter, but that *all may be so ill-treated, if the latter be so disposed*. They may be ill-fed,

hard-worked, ill-used, and wantonly and barbarously punished. They may be tortured, nay even deliberately and intentionally murdered, without the means of redress, and with the impunity of the criminal, so long as the evidence of a Negro is not admitted against a white man. If a white master only take care, that no other white man sees him commit such an atrocity, he is safe from the cognizance of the law. He may commit it in the sight of a thousand black spectators, and no harm will happen to him. In fact, from this system respecting their evidence, the slaves in our Islands have *no more real protection or redress from law*, than when the Abolitionists first took up the question of the slave trade. It is evident therefore, that the latter have still one-half of their work to perform, and that it is their duty to perform it. If they were ever influenced by any good motives, whether of humanity, justice, or religion, to undertake the cause of the Negroes, they must even now be influenced by the same motives to continue it. If any of those disorders still exist, which it was their intention to cure, they cannot (if these are curable) retire from their task and say—There is now no further need of our interference.

The first step then to be taken by the Abolitionists is to attempt to introduce an *entire new code of laws* into our colonies. The treatment of the Negroes there must no longer be left to depend upon the *presumed effects* of the abolition of the slave trade. Indeed there were persons well acquainted with Colonial concerns, who called the abolition *but a half-measure* at the time when it was first publicly talked of. They were sure, that it would never of itself answer the end proposed. Mr. Steele also confessed in his letter to Dr. Dickson * (of both whom more by and by), that "the abolition of the slave trade would be *useless*, unless at the same time the *infamous laws*, which he had pointed out, were *repealed*." Neither must the treatment of the Negroes be made to depend upon what may be called *contingent humanity*. We now leave in this country neither the horse, nor the ass, nor oxen, nor sheep to the contingent humanity even of *British bosoms*;—and shall we leave those, whom we have proved to be *men*, to the contingent humanity of persons whose eyes are familiarized with cruel sights, and who have witnessed the constant exposure of these poor creatures to oppression without the possibility of redress? No. The treatment of the Negroes must be made to depend upon *law*; and unless this be done, we shall look in vain for any real amelioration of their condition. In the first place, all those old laws which are repugnant to humanity and justice, must be done away. There must also be new laws, positive, certain, easy of execution, binding upon

* See Dickson's Mitigation of Slavery, p. 17.

all, by means of which the Negroes in our islands shall have speedy and substantial redress in real cases of ill usage, whether by starvation, over-work, or acts of personal violence, or otherwise. There must be new laws again more akin to the principle of *reward* than of *punishment*, of *privilege* than of *privation*, and which shall have a tendency to raise or elevate their condition, so as to fit them by degrees to sustain the rank of free men.

But if a new code of laws be indispensably necessary in our colonies in order to secure a better treatment to the slaves, to whom must we look for it? I answer, that we must not look for it to the West Indian Legislatures. For, in the first place, judging of what they are likely to do from what they have already done, or rather from what they have *not* done, we can have no reasonable expectation from that quarter. One hundred and fifty years have passed, during which long interval their laws have been without any material improvement. In the second place, the individuals composing these Legislatures, having been used to the exercise of unlimited power, would be unwilling to part with that portion of it, which would be necessary to secure the object in view. In the third place, their prejudices against their slaves are too great to allow them to become either impartial or willing actors in the case. The West Indian master looks down upon his slave with disdain. He has besides a certain antipathy against him. He hates the sight of his features, and of his colour; nay, he marks with distinctive opprobrium the very blood in his veins, attaching different names and more or less infamy to those who have it in them, according to the quantity which they have of it in consequence of their pedigree, or of their greater or less degree of consanguinity with the Whites. Hence the West Indian feels an unwillingness to elevate the condition of the Negro, or to do any thing for him as a human being. I have no doubt, that this prejudice has been one of the great causes why the improvement of our slave population *by law* has been so long retarded, and that the same prejudice will continue to have a similar operation, so long as it shall continue to exist. Not that there are wanting men of humanity among our West Indian legislators. Their humanity is discernible enough when it is to be applied to the *Whites*; but such is the system of slavery, and the degradation attached to this system, that their humanity seems to be lost or gone, when it is to be applied to the *Blacks*. Not, again, that there are wanting men of sense among the same body. They are shrewd and clever enough in the affairs of life, where they maintain an intercourse with the *Whites*; but in their intercourse with the *Blacks*, their sense appears to be shrivelled and not of its ordinary size. Look

at

at the laws of their own making, as far as the Negroes are concerned, and they are a collection of any thing but—wisdom.

It appears then, that if a new code of laws is indispensably necessary in our Colonies in order to secure a better treatment of the slaves there, we are not to look to the West Indian Legislatures for it. To whom then are we to turn our eyes for help on this occasion? I answer, to the British Parliament, to that Parliament, *which has already heard and redressed in part the wrongs of Africa.*

But here no doubt a considerable opposition would arise on the part of the West Indian planters. They would consider any such interference by the British Parliament as an invasion of their rights, and they would cry out accordingly. We remember that they set up a clamour when the abolition of the slave trade was first proposed. But what did Mr. Pitt say to them in the House of Commons? “I will now,” said he, “consider the proposition, that on account of some patrimonial rights of the West Indians, the prohibition of the slave trade would be an invasion of their legal inheritance. This proposition implied that Parliament had no right to stop the importations: but had this detestable traffic received such a sanction, as placed it more out of the jurisdiction of the Legislature for ever after, than any other branch of our trade? But if the laws respecting the slave trade implied a contract for its perpetual continuance, the House could never regulate any other of the branches of our national commerce. But *any contract* for the promotion of this trade must, in his opinion, *have been void from the beginning*; for if it was *an outrage upon justice*, and only another name for *fraud, robbery, and murder*, what *pledge* could devolve upon the Legislature to incur the obligation of becoming principals in the commission of such enormities by sanctioning their continuance?”

They set up a similar clamour, when the Registry Bill was discussed in Parliament, contending that it was an interference with their rights: but we must not forget the reply which Mr. Canning made to them on that occasion. “He had known, (he said,) and there might again occur, instances of obstinacy in the colonial assemblies, which left the British Parliament no choice but direct interference. Such conduct might now call for such an exertion on the part of Parliament; but all that he pleaded for was, that time should be granted, that it might be known if the colonial assemblies would take upon them to do what that House was pleased to declare should be done. The present address could not be misunderstood. It told the colonial assemblies, You are safe for the present from the interference of the British Parliament, in the belief, and on the promise made for you, that left
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to yourselves you will do what is required of you. To hold this language was sufficient. The Assemblies might be left to infer the consequences of a refusal, and Parliament might rest satisfied with the consciousness, that they held in their hands the means of accomplishing that which they had proposed." In a subsequent discussion of the subject in the House of Lords, Lord Holland remarked, that "in his opinion there had been more prejudice against this Bill than the nature of the thing justified; but, whatever might be the objection felt against it in the Colonies, it might be well for them to consider, that it would be *impossible for them to resist*; and that if the thing was not done by them, *it would be done for them*." But on this subject, that is, on the subject of colonial rights, I shall say more in another place. It will be proper, however, to repeat here, and to insist upon it too, that there is *no effectual way* of remedying the evil complained of, but by subjecting all the colonial laws to the *revision of the Legislature of the mother country*; and perhaps I shall disarm some of the opponents to this measure, and at any rate free myself from the charge of a novel and wild proposition, when I inform them that Mr. Long, the celebrated historian and planter of Jamaica, and to whose authority all West Indians look up, adopted the same idea. Writing on the affairs of Jamaica, he says: "The system* of Colonial government, and the imperfection of their several laws, are subjects, which never were, but *which ought to be*, strictly canvassed, examined, and amended by the British Parliament."

The second and last step to be taken by the Abolitionists should be, to collect all possible light on the subject of *emancipation*, with a view of carrying that measure into effect in its due time. They ought never to forget, that *emancipation* was included in the *original idea of the abolition of the slave trade*. Slavery was then as much an evil in their eyes as the trade itself; and so long as the former continues in its present state, the extinction of it ought to be equally an object of their care. All the slaves in our colonies, whether men, women, or children, whether *Africans* or *Creoles*, have been *unjustly deprived of their rights*. There is not a master, who has the least claim to their services in point of equity. There is, therefore, a great debt due to them, and for this no payment, no amends, no equivalent can be found, but a *restoration to their liberty*.

That all have been unjustly deprived of their rights, may be easily shown by examining the different grounds on which they are alleged to be held in bondage. With respect to those in our colo-

* See Dickson's Mitigation of Slavery, p. 339.

tion, *no such state as West Indian slavery*. Let us suppose for a moment, that slaves might be found enlightened by some pious Missionary, who should *refuse* to execute their master's orders on the principle that they were contrary to the will of God ; even this would not alter our view of the case. For such a *refusal* might, and probably would, be regarded as so immediately destructive to all authority and discipline, that it would be followed by *immediate and signal punishment*. Here then we should have a West Indian master reversing all the laws of right and wrong, and all the morality of the Gospel, by the practice of *punishing men for their virtues*. This case affords another argument, why a man cannot justly be born or continue a slave in the West Indian sense of the term. In fact, the whole system of our planters appears to be so directly in opposition to the whole system and spirit of our religion, (a religion requiring us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do unto others as we would they should do unto us,) that I have no conception, how consistently with it a man can be born a slave, such as the West Indian is ; nor how he can be, justly, or properly, a West Indian slave at all. There appears to me something even impious in the thought ; and I am convinced, that many years will not pass, before the West Indian slavery will fall, and that future ages will contemplate with astonishment the fact that preceding ages should have tolerated it.

It has now appeared, if I have reasoned conclusively, that the West Indians have no title to their slaves on the ground of purchase, nor on the plea of the law of birth, nor on that of any natural right, nor on that of reason or justice, and that Christianity absolutely annihilates it. It remains only to show, that they have no title to them on the ground of *original grants or permissions of Governments*, or of *Acts of Parliament*, or of *Charters*, or of *English law*.

With respect to original grants or permissions of Governments, the case is very clear. History informs us, that neither the African slave trade nor the West Indian slavery would have been allowed, had it not been for the *misrepresentations and falsehoods* of those, *who were first concerned in them*. The Governments of those times were made to believe, first, that the poor Africans embarked *voluntarily* on board the ships which took them from their native land ; and secondly, that they were conveyed to the Colonies principally for *their own benefit*, or out of *Christian feeling for them*, that they might afterwards *be converted to Christianity*. Take as an instance of the first assertion, the way in which Queen Elizabeth was deceived, in whose reign the execrable slave trade began in England. This great princess seems on the very commencement of the trade to have questioned its lawfulness. She seems to have entertained
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a religious scruple concerning it, and indeed to have revolved at the very thoughts of it. She seems to have been aware of the evils to which its continuance might lead, or that, if it were sanctioned, the most unjustifiable means might be made use of to procure the persons of the natives of Africa. And in what light she would have viewed any acts of this kind, had they taken place to her knowledge, we may conjecture from this fact—that when Captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa and Hispaniola, whither he had carried slaves, she sent for him, and, as we learn from Hill's Naval History, expressed her concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off *without their free consent*, declaring, “that it would be detestable and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers.” Capt. Hawkins promised to comply with the injunctions of Elizabeth in this respect. But he did not keep his word; for when he went to Africa again, *he seized many of the inhabitants and carried them off as slaves.* “Here (says Hill) began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery; an injustice and barbarity, which, so sure as there is vengeance in Heaven for the worst of crimes, will some time be the destruction of all who encourage it.” Take as an instance of the second what Labat, a Roman missionary, records in his account of the Isles of America. He says, that Louis the Thirteenth was very uneasy when he was about to issue the edict by which all Africans brought into his colonies were to be made slaves; and that this uneasiness continued, till he was assured that the introduction of them in this capacity into his foreign dominions was the readiest way of *converting them to the principles of the Christian religion.* It was with the understanding, then, that the Africans left their own country voluntarily, and that they were to receive the blessings of Christianity, that the first transportations were allowed, and that the first *English* grants and Acts of Parliament, and that the first *foreign* edicts, sanctioned them. We have therefore the fact well authenticated, as it relates to *original Government grants and permissions*, that the title of the owners of many of the Creole slaves in our colonies had its origin in *fraud and falsehood.*

Neither have the masters of slaves in our colonies any title to their slaves on account of any *charters*, which they may be able to produce, though their charters are the only source of their power. It is through these alone that they have hitherto legislated, and that they continue to legislate. And yet, though they have their charters, and though the slavery, which now exists, has been formed and kept together entirely by the laws which such charters have given them the power to make, this very slavery is *illegal.* There is not an individual, who holds any of the slaves by a *legal* title: for it is expressed in all these charters, that “the laws and statutes,

statutes, to be made under them; are *not to be repugnant*, but, as near as may be, *agreeable, to the laws and statutes of this our kingdom of Great Britain.*" But is it consistent with the laws of England, that any one man should have the power of forcing another to work for him without wages? Is it consistent with the laws of England, that any one man should have the power of flogging, beating, bruising, or wounding another at his discretion? Is it consistent with the laws of England, that a man should be judged by any but his peers? Is it consistent with the same laws that a man should be deprived of the power of giving evidence against any one who has injured him? or that there should be a privileged class, against whom no testimony can be admitted on certain occasions, though they should be the perpetrators of the most horrid crimes? But when we talk of consistency on this occasion, let us not forget that old law of Barbadoes, (made while the charter of that island was fresh in every body's memory, and therefore in the very teeth of the charter itself,) which runs thus: "If any slave, under punishment by his master, or by his order, shall suffer in life or member, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same: but if any person shall *wantonly or cruelly* kill his own slave, he shall pay the treasury 15*l*." And here let us remark, that, when Lord Seaforth, governor of Barbadoes, proposed, so lately as in 1802, the repeal of this sanguinary law, the Legislature of that island rejected the proposition with indignation. Nay, the very proposal to repeal it so stirred up at the time the bad passions of many, that several brutal murders of slaves were committed in consequence; and it was not till two or three years afterwards that the governor had influence enough to get the law repealed, and even then it was but very imperfectly done. Let the West Indians then talk no more of their *charters*; for in consequence of having legislated upon principles, which are at variance with those upon which the laws of England are founded, they have *forfeited them all*. The mother country has therefore a right to withdraw these charters whenever she pleases, and to substitute such others as she may think proper. And here let it be observed also, that the right of the West Indians to make any laws at all for their own islands being founded upon their charters, and upon these alone, and the laws relating to the slaves being contrary to what such charters prescribe, the *slavery itself*, that is, the daily living practice with respect to slaves under such laws, is *illegal and may be done away*. But if so, all our West Indian slaves are, without exception, unlawfully held in bondage. There is no master, who has a legal title to any of them. This assertion may appear strange and extravagant to many; but it does not follow on that account that it is the less true. It is an assertion, which has been made by a West Indian proprietor himself.

Mr.

Mr. Steele*, before quoted, furnishes us with what passed at the meeting of the Society of Arts in Barbadoes at their committee-room in August 1785, when the following question was in the order of the day; "Is there any law written, or printed, by which a proprietor can prove his title to his slave under or conformable to the laws of England?" And "Why, (immediately said one of the members,) why conformable to the laws of England? Will not the courts in England admit such proof as is authorized by *our slave laws*?"—"I apprehend not, (answered a second,) unless we can show that *our slave laws* (according to the limitations of the charter) are *not repugnant* to the laws of England."—The same gentleman resumed: "Does the original purchaser of an African slave in this island obtain any legal title from the merchant or importer of slaves—and of what nature? Does it set forth any title of propriety, agreeable to the laws of England (or even to the laws of nations) to be in the importer more than what depends upon his simple averment? And have not free Negroes been at sundry times trepanned by such dealers, and been brought contrary to the laws of nations, and sold here as slaves?"—"There is no doubt, (observed a third,) but such villainous actions have been done by worthless people: however, though an honest and unsuspecting man may be deceived in buying a stolen horse, it does not follow that he may not have a fair and just title to a horse or any thing else bought in an open and legal market; but according to the obligation of *being not repugnant to the laws of England*, I do not see how *we can have any title to our slaves* likely to be supported by the laws of England." In fact, the Colonial system is an excrescence upon the English Constitution, and is constantly at variance with it. There is not one English law, which gives a man a right to deprive of liberty any of his fellow creatures. Of course there cannot be, according to charters, any Colonial law to this effect. If there be, it is *null and void*. Nay, the very man, who is held in bondage by the Colonial law, becomes free by English law the moment he reaches the English shore. But we have said enough for our present purpose. We have shown that the slaves in our Colonies, whether they be Africans, or whether they be Creoles, *have been unjustly deprived of their rights*. There is of course a great debt due to them. They have a claim to a restoration to liberty; and as this restoration was included by the Abolitionists in their original idea of the abolition of the slave-trade, so it is their duty to endeavour to obtain it *the first moment it is practicable*. I shall conclude my observations on this part of the subject, in the words of that old champion of African liberty, Mr. W. Smith, the present Member for Norwich, when addressing

* See Dickson's Mitigation of Slavery, p. 102.

the House of Commons on the 25th of July 1822, respecting slavery. He admitted, alluding to the slaves in our colonies, that "immediate emancipation might be an injury, and not a blessing, to the slaves themselves. A period of *preparation*, which unhappily included delay, seemed to be necessary. The ground of this delay, however, was not the intermediate advantage to be derived from their labour, but a conviction of its expediency as it related to themselves. We had to *compensate* to these wretched beings for *ages of injustice*. We were bound by the strongest obligations to *train up* these subjects of our past injustice and tyranny for an *equal participation with ourselves in the blessings of liberty and the protection of the law*; and by these considerations ought our measures to be strictly and conscientiously regulated. It was only in consequence of the necessity of time to be consumed in such a preparation, that we could be justified in the retention of the Negroes in slavery for a *single hour*: and he trusted that the eyes of all men, both here and in the colonies, would be open to this view of the subject as their clear and indispensable duty."

Having led the reader to the first necessary step to be taken in favour of our slaves in the British Colonies,—namely, the procuring for them a new and better code of laws; and having since led him to the last or final one,—namely, the procuring for them the rights of which they have been unjustly deprived; I shall now confine myself entirely to this latter branch of the subject, being assured, that it has a claim to all the attention that can be bestowed upon it; and I trust that I shall be able to show, by appealing to historical facts, that however awful and tremendous the work of *emancipation* may seem, it is yet *practicable*; that it is practicable also *without danger*; and moreover, that it is practicable with the probability of *advantage* to all the parties concerned.

In appealing however to facts for this purpose, we must expect no light from antiquity to guide us on our way; for history gives us no account of persons in those times similarly situated with the slaves in the British colonies at the present day. There were no particular nations in those times, like the Africans, expressly set apart for slavery by the rest of the world, so as to have a stigma put upon them on that account, nor did a difference of the colour of the skin constitute always, as it now does, a most marked distinction between the master and the slave, so as to increase this stigma and to perpetuate antipathies between them. Nor did the slaves of antiquity, except perhaps once in Sparta, form the whole labouring population of the land; nor did they work incessantly, like the Africans, under the whip; nor were they generally so far behind their masters in cultivated intellect. Neither does ancient history give us in the cases of manumission, which it records, any parallel, from
which

which we might argue in the case before us. The ancient manumissions were those of individuals only, generally of but one at a time, and only now and then; whereas the emancipation, which we contemplate in the colonies, will comprehend *whole bodies of men*, nay, *whole populations*, at a given time. We must go therefore in quest of examples to modern times, or rather to the history of colonial slavery itself.

In examining a period comprehending the last forty years, I find no less than six or seven instances of the emancipation of African slaves in *bodies*. The first of these cases occurred at the close of the first American war. A number of slaves had run away from their North American masters and joined the British army. When peace came, the British Government did not know what to do with them. Their services were no longer wanted. To leave them behind to fall again into the power of their masters would have been great cruelty as well as injustice; and as to taking them to England, what could have been done with them there? It was at length determined to give *them their liberty*, and to disband them in Nova Scotia, and to settle them there upon grants of land as *British subjects* and as *free men*. The Nova Scotians on learning their destination were alarmed. They could not bear the thought of having such a number of black persons among them, and particularly as they understood the use of arms. The Government, however, persevering in its original intention, they were conveyed to Halifax, and distributed from thence into the country.

Their number, comprehending men, women, and children, were two thousand and upwards. To gain their livelihood, some of them worked upon little portions of land of their own; others worked as carpenters; others became fishermen; and others worked for hire in other ways. In process of time, having embraced Christianity, they raised places of worship of their own, and had ministers of their own from their own body. They led a harmless life, and gained the character of an industrious and honest people from their white neighbours. A few years afterwards the land in Nova Scotia being found too poor to answer, and the climate too cold for their constitutions, a number of them, to the amount of between thirteen and fourteen hundred, volunteered to form a new colony, which was then first thought of, at Sierra Leone. Accordingly, having been conveyed there, they realized the object in view; and they are to be found there, they or their descendants, most of them in independent and some of them in affluent circumstances, at the present day.

A second case may be taken from what occurred at the close of the second, or last American war. It may be remembered that a large British squadron, having on board a powerful land force, made

made a descent, in the year 1814, on different parts of the coast of the southern United States. During these expeditions, some hundreds of American slaves joined the British standard by invitation. When the campaign was over, the same difficulty occurred about disposing of these as in the former case. It was determined at length to fix them in Trinidad *as free labourers*. But, at Trinidad, a new objection was started against receiving them. The planters of that island were sure that no free Negroes would ever work for hire, and therefore that the refugees in question would, if made free and settled among them, support themselves *by plunder*. Sir Ralph Woodford, however, the governor of the island, resisted these prejudices. He received them into the island, and settled them where he supposed the experiment would be most safely made. The result has shown his discernment. These very men, formerly slaves in the Southern States of America, and afterwards emancipated in a body at Trinidad, are now earning their own livelihood, and with so much industry and good conduct, that the calumnies originally spread against them have entirely died away.

A third case comprehends those Negroes, who lately formed the West Indian black regiments. Some of these had been originally purchased, not as slaves but recruits, and others were drawn from among the slaves liberated from the holds of contraband slave ships. They had all served as soldiers in the West Indies. At length certain of these troops were removed to Sierra Leone and disbanded there, and others were disbanded in the West Indies, the whole of them receiving their discharge *as free men*. This happened in the spring of 1819. *Many hundreds* of them were *set at liberty at once* upon this occasion at Sierra Leone, where they founded Waterloo, Hastings, and other villages, being settled upon lands given them by the Government. Many brought with them their wives from the West Indies, and others selected wives from the natives on the spot. It appears from accounts received from Sir Charles M'Carthy, the governor of Sierra Leone, that they have conducted themselves to his satisfaction, and that they will prove a valuable addition to that colony. Those disbanded in the West Indies have conducted themselves with similar propriety.

A fourth case comprehends what are called the *captured Negroes* in the colony of Sierra Leone. They are totally distinct from any which have been mentioned. These were taken out of slave-ships captured at different times from the commencement of the abolition of the slave trade to the present moment, and on being landed *were made free*. After having recruited their health, they were taught to form villages and to cultivate land for themselves.

They

They were *made free* as they were landed from the vessels, in bodies of from fifty to three or four hundred at a time. They occupy at present twelve towns, in which there are both churches and schools. Regents Town having been one of the first established, containing about thirteen hundred souls, stands foremost in improvement, and has become a pattern for industry and good example. The people there have now fallen into the habits of civilized society. They are decently and respectably dressed. They attend divine worship regularly. They exhibit an orderly and moral conduct. In their town little shops begin to make their appearance; and their lands show the marks of industrious cultivation. Many of them, after having supplied their wants for the year, employ a surplus produce in the purchase of superfluities or comforts. The whole number of these persons is about 14,000.

Here then are four cases of slaves, either Africans or descendants of Africans, *emancipated* in *considerable bodies* at a time. I have kept them by themselves, because they differ from those which follow; and I shall now reason upon them. Let me premise, however, that I shall consider the first three of the cases as one, so that the same reasoning will do for all. They are alike indeed in their *main* features; and we must consider this as sufficient; for to attend minutely to every shade of difference*, which may occur in every case, seems unnecessary.

It will be said then, that the first three cases *are not strictly analogous* to that of the West Indian slaves. It will be contended, that the slaves in our West Indian colonies having been constantly in an abject and degraded state, their faculties are benumbed; they have contracted all the vices of slavery; and their bosoms burn with revenge against the whites. How then can persons in such a state be fit to receive their freedom? The slaves, on the other hand, who are comprehended in the above three cases, found in the British army a school as it were, *which fitted them by degrees for making a good use of their liberty*. While they were there, they were never out of the reach of discipline, and yet were left in some measure to act as free men. They obtained in this *preparatory school* some knowledge of the customs of civilized life. They were in the habit also of mixing familiarly with the white soldiers. Hence, it will be said, they were in a state much *more favourable for undergoing a change in their condition* than

* A part of the black regiments were procured in Africa as recruits, were not transported in slave-ships, and were never under West Indian masters: but it was only a small part compared with the whole number in the three cases.

the West Indian slaves. I admit all this. But I never stated, that our West Indian slaves were to be emancipated *suddenly*, but *by degrees*. I always took it for granted, that they were to have *their preparatory school* also. Nor must it be forgotten, as a comparison has been instituted, that if there was *less* danger in emancipating the other slaves, *because they had received something like a preparatory education* for the change, there was *far more* in another point of view, because *they were all acquainted with the use of arms*. Would our West Indian planters be as much at their ease, as they now are, if their slaves had acquired a *knowledge of the use of arms*, or would they think them on this account more or less fit for emancipation?

It will be said again, that the fourth case, consisting of the Sierra Leone captured Negroes, *is not strictly analogous* to the one in point. These may have been slaves but *for a short time*, previous to their capture upon the ocean, so that they had scarcely been slaves when they were returned to the rank of free men. Little or no change could have been effected in so short an interval in their disposition and their character; and, as they were never carried to the West Indies, so they could not have contracted the bad habits, or the degradation, or the vices, of the slavery there. It will be contended therefore, that they were *better, or less hazardous*, subjects for *emancipation*, than the slaves in our colonies. Giving to this objection its full weight, the case of the Sierra Leone captured Negroes will nevertheless be found to be a very strong one. They were all *Africans*. They were all *slaves*. They must have contracted *as mortal a hatred of the whites* from their sufferings on board ship by fetters, whips, and suffocation in the hold, as the West Indian slaves from those severities which are attached to their bondage on shore. Under these circumstances we find them *made free*; not after any *preparatory* discipline, but almost *suddenly*; and *not singly*, but *in bodies* at a time. We find them also settled or made to live under the *unnatural* government of the *whites*; and, what is more extraordinary, we find their present number, as compared with that of the whites in the same colony, nearly as *one hundred and fifty to one*; notwithstanding which superiority fresh emancipations are constantly taking place, as fresh cargoes of captured contrabandists arrive in port.

It will be said, lastly, that all the four cases put together prove nothing. They can give us nothing like a *positive assurance*, that the Negro slaves in our colonies would pass through the ordeal of emancipation without danger to their masters or the community at large. Certainly not. Nor if these instances had been far more numerous than they are, could they, in this world of accidents, have given us a *moral certainty of this*. They afford us however
a *hope*,

a hope, that emancipation is practicable without danger: for will any one pretend to say, that we should have had as much reason for entertaining such a hope, *if no such instances had occurred*; or that we should not have had reason to despair, *if four such experiments had been made, and if they had all failed*? They afford us again ground for believing, that there is a peculiar softness, and plasticity, and pliability in the African character. This softness may be collected almost every where from the travels of Mr. Mungo Park, and has been noticed by other writers, who have contrasted it with the unbending ferocity of the North American Indians and other tribes. But if this be a feature in the African character, we may account for the uniformity of the conduct of those Africans, who were liberated on the several occasions above mentioned, and for their yielding so uniformly to the impressions, which had been given them by their superiors, after they had been made free; and, if this be so, why should not our colonial slaves, if emancipated, conduct themselves in the same manner? Besides, I am not sure whether the good conduct of the liberated slaves in these cases was not to be attributed in part to a sense of interest, when they came to know, that their condition *was to be improved*. Self-interest is a leading principle with all who are born into the world; and why is the Negro slave in our colonies to be denied this common feeling of our nature?—why is he to rise against his master, when he is informed that his condition is to be bettered? On the contrary, is he not likely rather to rejoice and feel grateful, when he is made to *experience* better laws and better treatment?

The fifth case may comprehend the slaves of St. Domingo made free at different intervals in the course of the French Revolution.

To do justice to this case, I must give a history of the circumstances connected with it. When the French Revolution, which decreed equality of rights to all citizens, had taken place, the *free People of Colour* of St. Domingo, many of whom were persons of large property and liberal education, petitioned the National Assembly, that they might enjoy the same political privileges as the *Whites*. At length, in March 1790, the subject of the petition was discussed, when the Assembly adopted a decree concerning it. The decree, however, was worded so ambiguously, that the two parties in St. Domingo, the *Whites* and the *People of Colour*, interpreted it each in their own favour. This difference of interpretation gave rise to animosities between them, which were augmented by political party-spirit, according as they were royalists, or partizans of the French Revolution; so that disturbances took place and blood was shed.

In the year 1791, the *People of Colour* petitioned the Assembly
c 2 again,

again, but principally for an explanation of the decree in question. On the 15th of May, the subject was taken into consideration and the result was another decree in explicit terms, which determined that the *People of Colour* in all the French islands were entitled to all the rights of citizenship, provided *they were born of free parents on both sides*. The news of this decree had no sooner arrived at the Cape, than it produced an indignation almost amounting to phrensy among the *Whites*. They directly trampled under foot the national cockade, and with difficulty were prevented from seizing all the French merchant ships in the roads. After this the two parties armed against each other. Even camps began to be formed. Horrible massacres and conflagrations followed, the reports of which, when brought to the mother-country, were so terrible, that the Assembly rescinded the decree in favour of the *free People of Colour* in the same year.

In the year 1792, the news of this new decree reached St. Domingo, and produced as much irritation among the *People of Colour*, as the news of the former had done among the *Whites*, and hostilities were renewed between them. As soon as these events became known in France, the Conventional Assembly, which had then succeeded the Legislative, seeing no hope of reconciliation on either side, knew not what other course to take than to do justice, whatever the consequences might be. They resolved, accordingly, in the month of April, that the decree of 1791, which had been first made and then reversed by the preceding Assembly, should stand good, thus restoring to the *People of Colour* the privileges which had been before voted to them; and they appointed Santhonax, Polverel, and another, to repair as commissioners to St. Domingo, with a large body of troops, in order to enforce the decree and to keep the peace.

In the year 1793, the same divisions and the same bad blood continuing, notwithstanding the arrival of the commissioners, a very trivial matter, a quarrel between a *Mulatto* and a *White man* (an officer in the French marine), gave rise to new disasters. This quarrel took place at Cape François, on the 20th of June. On the same day the seamen left their ships in the roads, and came on shore, and made common cause with the white inhabitants of the town. On the other side were ranged the *Mulattos* and other *People of Colour*, and these were afterwards joined by some insurgent *Blacks*. The battle lasted nearly two days. During this time the arsenal was taken and plundered, some thousands were killed in the streets, and more than half the town was burnt. The commissioners, who were spectators of this horrible scene, and who had done all they could to restore peace, escaped unhurt, but they were left upon a heap of ruins, and with but little more power

power than the authority which their commission gave them. They had only about a thousand troops left in the place. They determined, therefore, under these circumstances, to call in the Slaves in the neighbourhood to their assistance. They issued a proclamation in consequence, by which *they promised to give freedom to all the Blacks who were willing to range themselves under the banners of the Republic.* This was the first proclamation made by public authority for emancipating slaves in St. Domingo, and was usually called the proclamation of Santhonax. The result of it was, that a considerable number of slaves came in and were enfranchised.

Soon after this transaction, Polverel left his colleague Santhonax at the Cape, and went in his capacity of commissioner to Port au Prince, the capital of the West. Here he found every thing quiet, and cultivation in a flourishing state. From Port au Prince he visited Les Cayes, the capital of the South. He had not, however, been long there, before he found that the minds of the slaves began to be in an unsettled state. They had become acquainted with what had taken place in the North, not only with the riots at the Cape, but the proclamation of Santhonax. Polverel therefore, seeing the impression which it had begun to make upon the minds of the slaves in these parts, was convinced that emancipation could be neither prevented nor even retarded, and that it was absolutely necessary for *the personal safety of the white planters*, that it should be extended *to the whole island.* He was so convinced of the necessity of this, *that in September 1793, he drew up a proclamation without further delay to that effect, and put it into circulation.* He dated it from Les Cayes. He exhorted the planters to patronize it. He advised them, if they wished to avoid the most serious calamities, to concur themselves in the proposition of giving freedom to their slaves. He then caused a registry to be opened at the Government House to receive the signatures of all those who should approve of his advice. It was remarkable that all the proprietors in these parts inscribed their names in the book. He then caused a similar registry to be opened at Port au Prince for the West. Here the same disposition was found to prevail. All the planters, except one, gave in their signatures. They had become pretty generally convinced by this time, that their own personal safety was connected with the measure. We may now add, that in the month of February 1794, the Conventional Assembly of France passed a decree for the abolition of slavery throughout *the whole of the French colonies.* Thus the Government of the mother-country confirmed freedom to those upon whom it had been bestowed by the commissioners. This decree put therefore *the finishing stroke to the whole.* It completed

pleted the emancipation of the *whole slave population of St. Domingo.*

Having given a concise history of the abolition of slavery in St. Domingo, I shall inquire how those who were liberated conducted themselves after this change in their situation.

With respect to those emancipated by Santhonax in the North, I do not find, in the various histories I have seen, any thing particular to communicate. With respect to those who were emancipated in the South and West, by the proclamation of Polverel, we are enabled to give a very pleasing account. Colonel Malenfant, who was resident in the island at the time, has made us acquainted with their general conduct and character. His statement, though short, is highly satisfactory *. "*After this public act of emancipation,*" says he, (by Polverel,) "*the Negroes remained quiet both in the South and in the West, and they continued to work upon all the plantations.* There were estates, indeed, which had neither owners nor managers resident upon them, for some of these had been put into prison by Montbrun; and others, fearing the same fate, had fled to the quarter which had just been given up to the English. Yet upon these estates, though abandoned, the Negroes continued their labours, where there were any, even inferior, agents to guide them; and on those estates, where no white men were left to direct them, they betook themselves to the planting of provisions; but upon *all the plantations* where the Whites resided, the Blacks continued to labour as quietly as before." A little further on in the work, ridiculing the notion entertained in France, that the Negroes would not work without compulsion, he takes occasion to allude to other Negroes, who had been liberated by the same proclamation, but who were more immediately under his own eye and cognizance †. "If," says he, "you will take care not to speak to them of their return to slavery, but talk to them about their liberty, you may with this latter word chain them down to their labour. How did Toussaint succeed? How did I succeed also before his time in the plain of the Cul de Sac, and on the Plantation Gouraud, more than eight months after liberty had been granted (by Polverel) to the slaves? Let those who knew me at that time, and even the Blacks themselves, be asked. They will all reply, that *not a single Negro* upon that plantation, consisting of more than four hundred and fifty labourers, *refused to work*; and yet this plantation was thought to be under the worst discipline, and the slaves the most idle, of

* Mémoire historique et politique des Colonies, et particulièrement de celle de St. Domingue, &c. Paris, August 1814, 8vo. p. 58.

† Pp. 125, 126.

any in the plain. I, myself, inspired the same activity into three other plantations, of which I had the management."

The above account is far beyond any thing that could have been expected. Indeed it is most gratifying. We find that the liberated Negroes *both in the South and the West*, continued to work upon their *old plantations*, and for their *old masters*; that there was also a *spirit of industry* among them; and that they gave no uneasiness to their employers; for they are described as continuing to work *as quietly as before*. Such was the conduct of the Negroes for the first nine months after their liberation, or up to the middle of 1794. Let us pursue the subject, and see how they conducted themselves after this period.

During the year 1795 and part of 1796, I can learn nothing about them, though I have ransacked the French historians for this purpose. Had any thing, however, occurred in the way of *outrage*, we should have heard of it. And here let me take this opportunity of setting my readers right, if, from not knowing the dates of occurrences, they should have connected the *outrages*, which assuredly took place in St. Domingo, in 1791 and 1792, with the effects of the emancipation of the slaves. The great massacres and conflagrations, which at that time made so frightful a picture in the history of this unhappy island, occurred in the *days of slavery, before the proclamations of Santhonax and Polvérel*, and before the great conventional decree of the mother-country was known. They had been occasioned, too, *not originally by the slaves themselves*, but by quarrels between the *white and coloured planters*, and between the *royalists* and the *revolutionists*, who, for the purpose of wreaking their vengeance upon each other, called in the aid of the slaves; and as to the insurgent Negroes of the North, in particular, who filled that part of the colony in those years with terror and dismay, they were originally put in motion, according to Malenfant, *by the royalists themselves*, to strengthen their own cause, and to *put down the partizans of the French revolution*. When Jean François and Biassou commenced the insurrection, there were many *white royalists* with them, and the Negroes were made to wear the *white cockade*. I repeat, then, that during the years 1795 and 1796, I can find nothing in the History of St. Domingo, wherewith to reproach the emancipated Negroes in the way of outrage*. There is every reason, on the other hand, to believe, that they conducted themselves, during this period, in as orderly a manner as before.

* There were occasionally marauding parties from the mountains, who pillaged in the plains; but these were the old insurgents, and not the emancipated Negroes.

of their superintendants or masters, the colony could never have prospered, as relates to cultivation, in the manner described.

The next witness to whom I shall appeal, is the estimable General Vincent, who now lives at Paris, though at an advanced age. He was a colonel, and afterwards a general of brigade of artillery in St. Domingo. He was stationed there during the time both of Santhonax and Toussaint. He was also a proprietor of estates in the island. He was the man who planned the renovation of its agriculture after the abolition of slavery, and one of the great instruments in bringing it to the perfection mentioned by Lacroix. In the year 1801, he was called upon by Toussaint to repair to Paris, to lay before the Directory the new constitution, which had been agreed upon in St. Domingo. He obeyed the summons. It happened, that he arrived in France just at the moment of the peace of Amiens : here he found, to his inexpressible surprise and grief, that Buonaparte was preparing an immense armament, to be commanded by Leclerc, for the purpose of restoring slavery in St. Domingo. He lost no time in seeing the First Consul, and he had the courage to say to him what, perhaps, no other man in France would have dared to say. He remonstrated against the expedition : he told him to his face, that though the army destined for this purpose was composed of the brilliant conquerors of Europe, it could do nothing in the Antilles. It would most assuredly be destroyed by the climate of St. Domingo, even if it should be doubtful, whether it would be destroyed by the Blacks. He stated, as another argument against the expedition, that it was totally unnecessary, and therefore criminal ; for that every thing *was going on well* in St. Domingo. *The proprietors were in peaceable possession of their estates ; cultivation was making a rapid progress ; the Blacks were industrious, and beyond example happy.* He conjured him, therefore, in the name of humanity, not to reverse this beautiful state of things. But his efforts were ineffectual. The die had been cast : and the only reward which he received from Buonaparte for his manly and faithful representations, was banishment to the Isle of Elba.

Having brought my examination into the conduct of the Negroes after their liberation down to 1802, the time of the invasion of the island by Leclerc, I must now leave a blank of nearly two years, or till the year 1804. It cannot be expected during a war, in which every man was called to arms to defend his own personal liberty and that of his family, that we should see plantations cultivated as quietly as before, or even cultivated at all. But this was not the fault of *the emancipated Negroes*, but of *their former masters*. It was owing to the prejudices of the latter, that this frightful invasion took place ; prejudices, however, which are common

mon to almost all slave owners. Accustomed to the use of arbitrary power, they could not brook the loss of their whips. Accustomed to look down upon the Negroes as an inferior race of beings, as mere reptiles of the earth, they could not bear, peaceably as these had conducted themselves, to come into that familiar contact with them, as *free labourers*, which the change of their situation required. They considered them, too, as property lost, but which was to be recovered. In an evil hour, they prevailed upon Buonaparte, by false representations and *promises of pecuniary support*, to undertake to restore things to their former state. The expedition at length arrived upon the shores of St. Domingo :—a scene of blood and torture followed, *such as history had seldom if ever before disclosed*, and compared with which, *though planned and executed by Whites**, all the barbarities said to have been perpetrated by the *insurgent Blacks* of the North, *amount comparatively to nothing*. At length, however, the French were driven from the island. Till that time, the planters had retained their property, and then it was, and not till then, that they lost their all. It cannot be expected that I should have any thing to say of the industry or good order of the emancipated Negroes, *during such a convulsive period*.

In the year 1804, Dessalines was proclaimed emperor of this fine territory. In process of time a great part of the black troops were disbanded, and returned to cultivation. As they were free when they became soldiers, so they continued to be free when they became labourers again. From that time to this, there has been no want of subordination or industry among them. They or their descendants are the persons, by whom the plains and valleys of St. Domingo *are still cultivated*, and they are reported to follow their occupations still, and with *as fair a character* as other free labourers in any other quarter of the globe.

We have now seen how the emancipated Negroes of St. Domingo have used their liberty, from the year 1793 (the era of their general emancipation) to the present day, a period of *thirty years*. An important question here seems to force itself upon us, "What were the measures taken, after so frightful an event as that of emancipation, to secure tranquillity and order, and to rescue the planters and the colony from ruin?" It appears, then, that the two commissioners, Santhonax and Polverel, aware of the mischief which might attend their decrees, took the best measures

* The French troops were not the authors of tearing to pieces the Negroes alive by bloodhounds, or of suffocating them by hundreds at a time in the holds of ships, or of drowning them (whole cargoes) by scuttling and sinking the vessels ;—but the *planters*.

they could devise to prevent it. One of their first steps was to draw up a short code of rules to be observed upon the plantations. These rules were printed and made public. They were also ordered to be read aloud to all the Negroes upon every estate, for which purpose they were to be assembled once a week. The preamble to these regulations insisted upon *the necessity of industry, without which every thing would go to ruin*. Among the rules, the two the most worthy of our notice were, that the labourers were to be obliged to hire themselves to the owner of an estate for *not less than a year*, at the end of which, but not before, they might quit his service, and engage with another : and that they were to receive *a third part* of the produce of the estate, as a recompense for their labour. These two were *fundamental* regulations. As to minor points, they were allowed to vary according to circumstances. This code subsisted for about three years.

Toussaint, when he came into power, reconsidered the subject, and adopted a new code. His first object was to prevent oppression on the part of the master or employer, and yet to secure obedience on the part of the labourer. Conceiving that there could be no liberty where any one man had the power of punishing another at his discretion, he took away from every master the use of the whip, and of the chain, and of every other instrument of correction, either by himself or his own order : he took away, in fact, *all power of arbitrary punishment*. Every master offending against this regulation was to be summoned, on complaint by the labourer, before a magistrate or intendant of police, who was to examine into the case, and to act accordingly. Conceiving, on the other hand, that a just subordination ought to be maintained, and that, wherever delinquency occurred, punishment ought to follow, he ordained, that all labourers offending against the plantation police, or not performing their contracts, should be brought before the same magistrate, who should examine and decide as in the former case. Thus justice was administered without respect of persons. It must be noticed that all punishments were to be executed by a public officer, that they might be considered not as punishments by the master, but *by the state*. Thus he maintained due subordination on the plantations, *without invading the liberty of individuals*, and subjecting them to individual tyranny and caprice.

Among plantation offences, idleness on the part of the labourer was one. A man was not to receive wages from his master, and to do nothing. He was obliged to perform a reasonable quantity of work, or be punished. Another offence was absence without leave, which was considered as desertion.

Toussaint

be emancipated *by degrees*, or that they should be made to pass through a certain course of discipline, *as through a preparatory school*, to fit them for the right use of their freedom. Again, can we forget the unfavourable circumstances, in which the slaves of St. Domingo were placed, for a year or two before their liberation, in another point of view? The island at this juncture was a prey to *political discord, civil war, and foreign invasion*. The slave owners were politically at variance with each other, as they were white or coloured persons, or republicans, or royalists. They were quarreling and fighting with each other, and shedding each other's blood. The English, at the same time, who were in possession of the strong maritime posts, were alarming the country by their incursions. The slaves, unfortunately, had been taught to imbibe the political animosities, and to take the side of their respective masters, and had been familiarised to scenes of violence and bloodshed. Now, whenever emancipation is to be proposed in our own colonies, I anticipate neither *political parties*, nor *civil wars*, nor *foreign invasion*,—but a time of *tranquillity and peace*. Who then will affirm, that there could be any thing like the danger and difficulties in emancipating the slaves there, which existed when the slaves of St. Domingo were made free? But some objector, after all, may say, "There is one point in which your analogy is deficient. While Toussaint was in power, the Government of St. Domingo was a *black* one, and the Blacks would be more willing to submit to the authority of a *black* Government than of a *white* one. Hence there were fewer disorders produced by emancipation in St. Domingo, than would probably occur in our own islands." But to such an objector, I should reply, that he knows nothing of the history of St. Domingo. The Government of that island was French, *or white*, from the very infancy of emancipation to the arrival of the expedition of Leclerc. The slaves were made free under the government of Santhonax and Polverel. When these retired, other *white* commissioners succeeded them. When Toussaint came into power, he was not supreme; Generals Hedouille, Vincent, and others, had a share in the government. Toussaint himself *received his commission from the French Directory*, and acted under it. He caused it every where to be made known, but particularly among his officers and troops, that he retained the island for the *French Government*, and that *France* was the *governing country*.

A sixth class of slaves emancipated in bodies may comprehend those, who began to be liberated about eighteen months ago in the newly-erected State of Columbia. General Bolivar began the great work by enfranchising his own slaves, to the number of between seven and eight hundred. But he was not satisfied with
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sider that *eighteen* months have elapsed, and that *many** *thousands* had been freed between the passing of the decree and the date of the last accounts from Columbia, the measure cannot but be considered to have had a sufficient trial.

The seventh class may comprehend the slaves of the Honourable Joshua Steele, whose emancipation was attempted in Barbadoes between the years 1783 and 1790.

It appears that Mr. Steele lived in London. He was Vice-president of the London Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, and a person of talent and erudition. He was the proprietor of three estates in Barbadoes. His agent there used to send him accounts annually of his concerns; but these were latterly so ruinous, not only in a pecuniary point of view, but as they related to what Mr. Steele called the *destruction* of his Negroes, that he resolved, though then at the advanced age of eighty, to go there, and to look into his affairs himself. Accordingly he embarked, and arrived there early in the year 1780.

Mr. Steele had not been long in Barbadoes, before he saw enough to convince him that there was something radically wrong in the management of the slaves, and he was anxious to try, for the sake as well of humanity as of his own interest, to effect a reform. But how was he to accomplish this? "He considered within himself how difficult it would be, nay, impossible, for a single proprietor to attempt so great a novelty as to bring about an alteration of manners and customs protected by iniquitous laws, and to which the gentlemen of the country were reconciled as to the best possible for amending the indocile and intractable ignorance of Negro slaves." It struck him, however, among the expedients which occurred, that he might be able to form a Society, similar to that in London, for the purpose of improving the arts, manufactures, and commerce of Barbadoes; and if so, he "indulged a hope that by means of it conferences might be introduced on patriotic subjects, in the course of which new ideas

* The slave population consisted at the time of passing the decree of from 250,000 to 300,000 souls.

† See Dr. Dickson's *Mitigation of Slavery*, London 1814, from whence every thing relating to this subject is taken. Dr. Dickson had been for many years secretary to Governor Hay, in Barbadoes, where he had an opportunity of studying the Slave agriculture as a system. Being in London afterwards when the Slave Trade controversy was going on in Parliament, he distinguished himself by silencing the different writers who defended the West Indian slavery. There it was that Mr. Steele addressed himself to him by letter, and sent him those invaluable papers, which the Doctor afterwards published under the modest title of "*Mitigation of Slavery by Steele and Dickson*" No one was better qualified than Dr. Dickson to become the Editor of Mr. Steele.

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It appears that Mr. Steele was satisfied with this his first step, and he took no other for some time. At length, in about another year, he ventured upon the second. He "tried whether he could not obtain the labour of his Negroes by *voluntary* means instead of the old method by violence." On a certain day he offered a pecuniary reward for holing canes, which is the most laborious operation in West Indian husbandry. "He offered two-pence halfpenny (currency), or about three-halfpence (sterling), per day, with the usual allowance to holers of a dram with molasses, to any twenty-five of his negroes, both men and women, who would undertake to hole for canes an acre per day, at about 96½ holes for each Negro to the acre. The whole gang were ready to undertake it; but only fifty of the volunteers were accepted, and many among them were those who *on much lighter occasions* had usually pleaded *infirmity and inability*: but the ground having been moist, they holed twelve acres within six days with great ease, having had *an hour*, more or less, *every evening to spare*; and the like experiment was repeated with the like success. More experiments with such premiums on weeding and deep hoeing were made by task-work per acre, and all succeeded in like manner, their premiums being all punctually paid them in proportion to their performance. But afterwards some of the same people being put *without premium* to weed on a loose cultivated soil in the common manner, *eighteen* Negroes did not do as much in a given time as *six* had performed of the like sort of work a few days before with the premium of two-pence halfpenny." The next year Mr. Steele made similar experiments. Success attended him again; and from this time task-work, or the *voluntary* system, became the general practice of the estate.

Mr. Steele did not proceed to put the third question to trial till the year 1789. The Society of Arts, which he had instituted in 1781, had greatly disappointed him. Some of the members, looking back to the discussions which had taken place on the subject of Slavery, began to think that they had gone too far as slaveholders in their admissions. They began to insinuate, "that they had been taken in, under the specious appearance of promoting the arts, manufactures, and commerce of Barbadoes, to *promote dangerous designs against its established laws and customs*." Discussions therefore of this sort became too unpopular to be continued. It was therefore not till Mr. Steele found, that he had no hope of assistance from this Society, and that he was obliged to depend solely upon himself, that he put in force the remainder of his general plan. He had already, in 1783, abolished arbitrary punishment and instituted a Negro-magistracy: and since that time (in 1785) he had adopted the system of *working by the piece*.

piece. But the remaining part of his plan went the length of *altering the very conditum* of the slaves; and it is of this alteration, a most important one (in 1789), that I am now to speak.

Mr. Steele took the hint for the particular mode of improving the condition of his slaves, which I am going to describe, from the practice of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors in the days of Villainage, which, he says, was "the most wise and excellent mode of civilizing savage slaves." There were in those days three classes of villeins. The first or lowest consisted of villeins in gross, who were alienable at pleasure. The second of villeins regardant, who were *adscripti glebæ*, or attached as freehold property to the soil. And the third or last, of copyhold bondmen, who had tenements of land, for which they were bound to pay in services. The villeins first mentioned, or those of the lowest class, had all these gradations to pass through, from the first into the second, and from the second into the third, before they could become free men. This was the model, from which Mr. Steele resolved to borrow, when he formed his plan for changing the condition of his slaves. He did not, however, adopt it throughout, but he chose out of it what he thought would be most suitable to his purpose, and left the rest. We may see what the plan was, from the following account.

In the year 1789 he erected his plantations into *manors*. It appears that the Governor of Barbadoes had the power by charter, with the consent of the majority of the council, of dividing the island into manors, lordships, and precincts, and of making freeholders; and though this had not yet been done, Mr. Steele hoped, as a member of council, to have influence sufficient to get his own practice legalized in time. Presuming upon this, he registered in the *manor-book* all his adult male slaves as *copyholders*. He then gave them separate tenements of lands, which they were to occupy, and upon which they were to raise whatever they might think most advantageous. These tenements consisted of half an acre of plantable and productive land to each adult, a quantity supposed to be sufficient with industry to furnish him and his family with provision and clothing. The tenements were made descendible to the heirs of the occupiers or copyholders, that is, to their children *on the plantations*; for no part of the succession was to go out of the plantations to the issue of any foreign wife, and, in case of no such heirs, they were to fall in to the lord to be re-granted according to his discretion. It was also inscribed that any one of the copyholders, who would not perform his services to the manor (the refractory and others), was to forfeit his tenement and his privileged rank, and to go back to the state of villain
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in gross; and to be subject to corporal punishment as before. "Thus," says Mr. Steele, "we run no risk whatever in making the experiment by giving such copyhold-tenements to all our well-deserving Negroes, and to all in general, when they appear to be worthy of that favour."

Matters having been adjusted so far, Mr. Steele introduced the practice of *rent* and *wages*. He put an annual rent upon each tenement, which he valued at so many days' labour. He set a rent also upon personal service, as due by the copyholder to his master in his former quality of slave, seeing that his master or predecessor had purchased a property in him, and this he valued in the same manner. He then added the two rents together, making so many days' work altogether, and estimated them in the current money of the time. Having done this, he fixed the daily wages or pay to be received by the copyholders for the work which they were to do. They were to work 260 days in the year for him, and to have 48 besides Sundays for themselves. He reduced these days' work also to current money. These wages he fixed at such a rate, that "they should be more than equivalent to the rent of their copyholds and the rent of their personal services when put together, in order to hold out to them an evident and profitable incentive to their industry." It appears that the rent of the tenement, half an acre, was fixed at the rate of 3*l.* currency, or between forty and fifty shillings sterling per acre, and the wages for a man belonging to the first gang at 7½*d.* currency or 6*d.* sterling per day. As to the rent for the personal services, it is not mentioned.

With respect to labour and things connected with it, Mr. Steele entered the following among the local laws in the *court-roll* of the tenants and tenements. The copyholders were not to work for other masters without the leave of the lord. They were to work ten hours per day. If they worked over and above that time, they were to be paid for every hour a tenth part of their daily wages, and they were also to forfeit a tenth for every hour they were absent or deficient in the work of the day. All sorts of work, however, were to be reduced, as far as it could be done by observation and estimation, to equitable task-work. Hoes were to be furnished to the copyholders in the first instance; but they were to renew them, when worn out, at their own expense. The other tools were to be lent them, but to be returned to the store-keeper at night, or to be paid for in default of so doing. Mr. Steele was to continue the hospital and medical attendance at his own expense as before.

Mr. Steele, having now rent to receive and wages to pay, was obliged to settle a new mode of accounting between the plantation
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and the labourers. "He brought, therefore, all the minor crops of the plantation, such as corn, grain of all sorts, yams, eddoes, besides rum and molasses, into a regular cash account by weight and measure, which he charged to the copyhold-storekeeper at market prices of the current time, and the storekeeper paid them at the same prices to such of the copyholders as called for them in part of wages, in whose option it was to take either cash or goods, according to their earnings, to answer all their wants. Rice, salt, salt fish, barrelled pork, Cork butter, flour, bread, biscuit, candles, tobacco and pipes, and all species of clothing, were provided and furnished from the store at the lowest market prices. An account of what was paid for daily subsistence, and of what stood in their arrears to answer the rents of their lands, the fines and forfeitures for delinquencies, their head-levy, and all other casual demands, was accurately kept in columns with great simplicity, and in books, which checked each other."

Such was the plan of Mr. Steele, and I have the pleasure of being able to announce, that the result of it was *highly satisfactory to himself*. In the year 1788, when only the first and second part of it had been reduced to practice, he spoke of it thus:—"A plantation," says he, "of between seven and eight hundred acres has been governed by fixed laws and a Negro-court for *about five years with great success*. In this plantation no overseer or white servant is allowed to lift his hand against a Negro, nor can he arbitrarily order a punishment. Fixed laws and a court or jury of their peers *keep all in order* without the ill effect of sudden and intemperate passions." And in the year 1790, about a year after the last part of his plan had been put to trial, he says in a letter to Dr. Dickson, "My copyholders have succeeded beyond my expectation." This was his last letter to that gentleman, for he died in the beginning of the next year. Mr. Steele went over to Barbadoes, as I have said before, in the year 1780, and he was then in the eightieth year of his age. He began his humane and glorious work in 1783, and he finished it in 1789. It took him, therefore, six years to bring his Negroes to the state of vassalage described, or to that state from whence he was sure that they might be transferred without danger, in no distant time, to the rank of freemen, if it should be thought desirable. He lived one year afterwards to witness the success of his labours. He had accomplished, therefore, all he wished, and he died in the year 1791, in the ninety-first year of his age.

It may be proper now, and indeed useful to the cause which I advocate, to stop for a moment, just to observe the *similarity of sentiment* of two great men, quite unknown to each other; one of whom (Mr. Steele) was concerned in preparing Negro-slaves for freedom.

freedom, and the other (Toussaint) in devising the best mode of managing them after they had been suddenly made free.

It appears, first, that they were both agreed in this point, viz. that the *first step* to be taken in either case, was *the total abolition of arbitrary punishment*.

It appears, secondly, that they were nevertheless both agreed again as to the necessity of punishing delinquents, but that they adopted different ways of bringing them to justice. Toussaint referred them to *magistrates*, but Mr. Steele to a *Negro-court*. I should prefer the latter expedient; first, because a Negro-court may be always at hand, whereas magistrates may live at a distance from the plantations, and not be always at home. Secondly, because the holding of a Negro-court would give consequence to those Negroes who should compose it, not only in their own eyes but in the eyes of others; and everything, that might elevate the Black character, would be useful to those who were *on the road to emancipation*; and, lastly, because there must be something satisfactory and consoling to the accused to be tried by their peers.

It appears, thirdly, that both of them were agreed again in the principle of making the Negroes, in either case, *adscripti glebæ*, or attached to the soil, though they might differ as to the length of time of such ascription.

And it appears, lastly, that they were agreed in another, and this the only remaining point, viz. on the necessity of holding out a stimulus to either, so as to excite in them a very superior spirit of industry to any they had known before. They resorted, however, to different means to effect this. Toussaint gave the labourers one *fourth* of the produce of the land, deducting their personal expenses. Mr. Steele, on the other hand, gave them *daily wages*. The plan of Mr. Steele seems most consonant to sound principle and to the English practice.

But to return. It is possible that some objector may argue thus:—"The case of Mr. Steele is not a complete precedent, because his slaves were never *fully* emancipated. He had brought them only to *the threshold* of liberty, but no further. They were only *copyholders*, but not *free men*." To this I reply, first, That Mr. Steele *accomplished all that he ever aimed at*. I have his own words for saying, that so long as the present iniquitous slave laws, and the distinction of colour, should exist, it would be imprudent to go further. I reply again, That the partizans of emancipation would be happy indeed, if they could see the day when our West Indian slaves should arrive at the rank and condition of the copyholders of Mr. Steele. The freedom which they desire they believe to be *compatible with the joint interest of the master and the slave*. At the same time they maintain, that the copyholders

holders of Mr. Steele had been brought so near to the condition of free men, that a removal from one into the other, after a certain time, seemed more like a thing of course than a matter to be attended either with difficulty or danger. Their moral character must have improved. If they had ceased for seven years to feel themselves degraded by arbitrary punishment, they must have acquired some little independence of mind. If they had been paid for their labour, they must have acquired something like a spirit of industry. If they had been made to pay rent for their cottage and land, and to maintain themselves, they must have been made to *look beforehand, to think for themselves and families from day to day, and to provide against the future*; all which operations of the mind are the characteristics only of free men. The case, therefore, of Mr. Steele is most important and precious: for it shows us, first, that the emancipation, which we seek, is a thing which *may be effected*. The plan of Mr. Steele was put in force in a British Island, and that, which was done in one British Island, may, under similar circumstances, *be done again in the same, as well as in another*. It shows us, too, *how* this emancipation may be brought about. The process is so clearly detailed, that any one may follow it. It is also a case for encouragement, inasmuch as it was attended with success.

I have now considered no less than six cases of slaves emancipated in bodies, and a seventh, of slaves who were led up to the very threshold of freedom, comprehending altogether not less than between five and six hundred thousand persons; and I have considered also all the objections that could be reasonably advanced against them. The result is a belief on my part, that emancipation is not only *practicable*, but that it is *practicable without danger*. The slaves, whose cases I have been considering, were resident in different parts of the world. There must have been, amongst such a vast number, persons of *all characters*. Some were liberated, who had been *accustomed to the use of arms*; others at a time when the land in which they sojourned was afflicted *with civil and foreign wars*; others again *suddenly*, and with *all the vicious habits of slavery upon them*. And yet, under all these disadvantageous circumstances, I find them all, without exception, *yielding themselves to the will of their superiors, so as to be brought by them with as much ease and certainty into the form intended for them, as clay in the hands of the potter is fashioned to his own model*. But, if this be so, I think I should be chargeable with a want of common sense, were I *to doubt for a moment*, that emancipation *was practicable*; and I am not sure that I should not be exposed to the same charge, were I to doubt, that emancipation *was practicable without danger*. For I have
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not been able to discover (and it is most remarkable) *a single failure* in any of the cases which have been produced. I have not heard throughout this vast mass of emancipated persons *of a single instance of bad behaviour*, not even of a refusal to work, or of disobedience to orders. Much less have I heard of frightful commotions, or massacres, or of revenge for past injuries, even when they had it amply in their power. In fact, the Negro character is malleable at the European will. There is, as I have observed before, a singular pliability in the constitutional temper of the Negroes, and they have besides a quick sense of their own interest, which influences their conduct. I am convinced, that West India masters may do what they will with their slaves; and that they may lead them through any changes they please, and with perfect safety to themselves, if they will only make the slaves understand that they are to be benefited thereby.

Having now established, I hope, two of my points,—first, that emancipation is *practicable*, and, secondly, that it is *practicable without danger*,—I proceed to show the probability that *it would be attended with profit* to those planters who should adopt it. I return, therefore, to the case of Mr. Steele.

I shall begin by quoting the following expressions of Mr. Steele: “I have employed and amused myself,” says he, “by introducing *an entire new mode* of governing my own slaves, for their happiness, and also *for my own profit*.” It appears then, that Mr. Steele’s new method of management was *profitable*. Let us now try to make out from his own account, of what these profits consisted.

Mr. Steele informs us, that his superintendant had obliged him to hire all his holing at 3*l.* currency, or 2*l.* 2*s.* 10*d.* sterling, per acre. He was very much displeased at these repeated charges; and then it was, that he put to trial, as I have before related, the question whether he could not obtain the labour of his Negroes by voluntary means, instead of by the old method of violence. He made, therefore, an attempt to introduce task-work, or labour with a promised premium for extraordinary efforts, upon his estates. He gave his Negroes a small pecuniary reward over and above the usual allowances, and the consequence was, as he himself says, that “the *poorest, feeblest*, and by character *the most indolent* Negroes of the whole gang, cheerfully performed the holing of his land, generally said to be the most laborious work, for *less than a fourth part* of the stated price paid to the undertakers for holing.” This experiment I have detailed above. After this he continued the practice of task-work for a premium. He describes the operation of such a system upon the minds of his Negroes in the following words: “According to the vulgar mode of governing
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Negro-slaves, they feel only the desponding fear of punishment for doing less than they ought, without being sensible that the settled allowance of food and clothing is given, and should be accepted, as a reward for doing well, while in task-work the expectation of winning the reward, and the fear of losing it, have a double operation to exert their endeavours." Mr. Steele was benefited in another point of view by this new practice. "He was clearly convinced, that saving time, by doing in one day as much as would otherwise require three days, was *worth more than double the premium*, the *timely effects* on vegetation being critical." He found also to his satisfaction, that "during all the operations under the premium there were *no disorders, no crowding to the sick-house, as before.*"

This account shows clearly how Mr. Steele made a part of his profits. These profits consisted first of a *saving of expense* in his husbandry, which saving was *not made by others*. He had his land holed at *one-fourth* of the usual rent. Let us apply this to all the other operations of husbandry, such as weeding, deep hoeing, &c. in a large farm of nearly eight hundred acres, and we shall see how considerable the savings would be in one year. His Negroes again did not counterfeit sickness as before, in order to be excused from labour, but rather wished to labour in order to obtain the reward. There was, therefore, no crowding to the hospitals. This constituted a *second source of saving*; for they who were in the hospitals were maintained by Mr. Steele without earning any thing, while they who were working in the field left to their master in their work, when they went home at night, a value superior to that which they had received from him for their day's labour. But there was another saving of equal importance, which Mr. Steele calls a saving of *time*, but which he might with more propriety have called a saving of *season*. This saving of season, he says, was *worth more than double the premium*; and so it might easily have been. There are soils, every farmer knows, which are so constituted, that if you miss your day, you miss your season; and, if you miss your season, you lose probably half your crop. The saving, therefore, of the season, by having a whole crop instead of half a one, was a *third source of saving of money*. Now let us put all these savings together, and they will constitute a great saving or profit; for as these savings were made by Mr. Steele in consequence of *his new plan*, and were *therefore not made by others*, they constituted an *extraordinary profit* to him; or they added to the profit, whatever it might have been, which he used to receive from the estate before his *new plan* was put in execution.

But I discover other ways in which Mr. Steele was benefited,

as I advance in the perusal of his writings. It is impossible to overlook the following passage : " Now," says he (alluding to his new system), " every species of provisions raised on the plantations, or bought from the merchants, is charged at the market-price to the copyhold-store, and discharged by what has been paid on the several accounts of every individual bond-slave ; whereas for all those species heretofore, I never saw in any plantation-book of my estates any account of what became of them, or how they were disposed of, nor of their value, other than in these concise words, *they were given in allowance to the Negroes and stock*. Every year, for six years past, this great plantation has bought several hundred bushels of corn, and was scanty in all ground-provisions, our produce always falling short. This year, 1790, *since the establishment of copyholders, though several acres less were planted last year in Guinea corn than usual*, yet we have been able to sell *several hundred bushels* at a high price, and *we have still a great stock in hand*. I can place this saving to no other account, than that there is now an exact account kept by all produce being paid as cash to the bond-slaves ; and also as all our watchmen are obliged to pay for all losses that happen on their watch, they have found it their interest to look well to their charge ; and consequently that we have had much less stolen from us than before this new government took place."

Here then we have seen *another considerable source of saving* to Mr. Steele, namely, that *he was not obliged to purchase any corn for his slaves as formerly*. My readers will be able to judge better of this saving, when I inform them of what has been the wretched policy of many of our planters in this department of their concerns. Look over their farming memoranda, and you will see *sugar, sugar, sugar*, in every page ; but you may turn over leaf after leaf, before you will find the words *provision grounds*. By means of this wretched policy, slaves have often suffered most grievously. Some of them have been half-starved. Starvation, too, has brought on disorders which have ultimately terminated in their death. Hence their masters have suffered losses, besides the expense incurred in buying what they ought to have raised upon their own estates, and this perhaps at a dear market : and in this wretched predicament Mr. Steele appears to have been placed when he first went to Barbadoes. His slaves, he tells us, had been reduced in number by bad management. Even for six years afterwards he had been obliged to buy several hundred bushels of corn : but in the year 1790 he had sold several hundred bushels at a high price, and had still a great stock on hand. And to what was all this owing ? Not to an exact account kept at the store (for some may have so misunderstood Mr. Steele) ; for how could an exact account kept there, have occasioned an increase in the produce

had cleared in the first, with what it had cleared in the last of these periods, and have recourse to figures, we shall find that Mr. Steele had *more than tripled* the income of it, in consequence of *his new management*, during his residence in Barbadoes. And this is in fact what he says himself in words at full length, in his answer to the 17th question proposed to him by the Committee of the Privy-council on the affairs of the slave trade. "In a plantation," says he, "of 200 slaves in June 1780, consisting of 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, though under the exertions of an able and honest manager, there were only 15 births, and no less than 57 deaths, in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of governing the slaves. The whips were taken from all the white servants. All arbitrary punishments were abolished, and all offences were tried and sentence passed by a Negro court. In four years and three months after this change of government, there were 44 births, and only 41 deaths, of which ten deaths were of superannuated men and women, some above 80 years old. But in the same interval the annual net clearance of the estate was *above three times more than it had been for ten years before!!!*"

Dr. Dickson, the editor of Mr. Steele, mentions these profits also, and in the same terms, and connects them with an eulogium on Mr. Steele, which is worthy of our attention. "Mr. Steele," says he, "saw that the Negroes, like all other human beings, were to be stimulated to permanent exertion only by a sense of their own interests in providing for their own wants and those of their offspring. He therefore tried *rewards*, which immediately roused the most indolent to exertion. His experiments ended in *regular wages*, which the industry he had excited among his whole gang enabled him to pay. Here was a natural, efficient, and profitable reciprocity of interests. His people became contented; his mind was freed from that perpetual vexation, and that load of anxiety, which are inseparable from the vulgar system, and in little more than four years the annual net clearance of his property *was more than tripled*." Again in another part of the work, "Mr. Steele's plan may no doubt receive some improvements, which his great age obliged him to decline"—"but it is perfect as far as it goes. *To advance above 300 field-negroes, who had never before moved without the whip, to a state nearly resembling that of contented, honest, and industrious servants, and, after paying for their labour, to triple in a few years the annual net clearance of the estate*,—these, I say, were great achievements for an aged man in an untried field of improvement, pre-occupied by inveterate vulgar prejudice. He has indeed accomplished all that was really doubtful or difficult in the undertaking, and perhaps all that is at present desirable either for owner or slave; for he has ascertained as a fact, what was before only known

known to the learned as a theory, and to practical men as a paradox, that *the paying of slaves for their labour does actually produce a very great profit to their owners.*"

I have now proved (as far as the plan* of Mr. Steele is concerned) my third proposition, or *the probability that emancipation would promote the interests of those who should adopt it*; but as I know of no other estate similarly circumstanced with that of Mr. Steele, that is, where emancipation has been tried, and where a detailed result of it has been made known, I cannot confirm it by other similar examples. I must have recourse, therefore, to some new species of proof. Now it is an old maxim, as old as the days of Pliny and Columella, and confirmed by Dr. Adam Smith, and all the modern writers on political economy, that *the labour of free men is cheaper than the labour of slaves*. If therefore I should be able to show that this maxim would be true if applied to all the operations and demands of West Indian agriculture, I should be able to establish my proposition on a new ground: for it requires no great acuteness to infer, that, if it be cheaper to employ free men than slaves in the cultivation of our islands, emancipation would be a profitable process.

I shall show, then, that the old maxim just mentioned is true, when applied to the case in our own islands, first, by establishing the fact that *free men*, people of colour, in the East Indies, are employed in *precisely the same concerns* (the cultivation of the cane and the making of sugar) as the slaves in the West, and that they are employed *at a cheaper rate*. The testimony of Henry Botham, Esq. will be quite sufficient for this point. That gentleman resided for some time in the East Indies, where he became acquainted with the business of a sugar estate. In the year 1770 he quitted the East for the West. His object was to settle in the latter part of the world, if it should be found desirable so to do. For this purpose he visited all the West Indian islands, both English and French, in about two years. He became during this time a planter, though he did not continue long in this situation; and he superintended also Messrs. Bosanquets' and J. Fatio's sugar-plantation in their partners' absence. Finding at length the unprofitable way in which the West Indian planters conducted their concerns, he returned to the East Indies in 1776, and established sugar-works

* It is much to be feared that this beautiful order of things was broken up after Mr. Steele's death by his successors, either through their own prejudices, or their unwillingness or inability to stand against the scoffs and prejudices of others. It may be happy, however, for thousands now in slavery, that Mr. Steele lived to accomplish his plan. The constituent parts and result of it being known, a fine example is shown to those who may be desirous of trying emancipation.

at Bencoolent, on his own account. Being in London in the year 1789, when a committee of privy council was sitting to examine into the question of the slave trade, he delivered a paper to the board on the mode of cultivating a sugar plantation in the East Indies; and this paper being thought of great importance, he was summoned afterwards in 1791 by a committee of the House of Commons, and was examined personally upon it.

It is very remarkable that the very first sentence in this paper announced the fact at once, that "sugar, better and *cheaper* than that in the West Indian islands, was produced *by free men*."

Mr. Botham then explained the simple process of making sugar in the East. "A proprietor, generally a Dutchman, used to let his estate, say 300 acres or more; with proper buildings upon it, to a Chinese, who lived upon it and superintended it, and who relet it to free men in parcels of 50 or 60 acres, on condition that they should plant it in canes for so much for every pecul, 133lbs., of sugar produced. This superintendant hired people from the adjacent villages to take off his crop. One lot of task-men with their carts and buffaloes cut the canes, carried them to the mill, and ground them. A second set boiled them, and a third clayed and basketed them for market at so much per pecul. Thus the renter knew with certainty what every pecul would cost him, and he incurred no unnecessary expense; for, when the crop was over, the task-men returned home. By dividing the labour in this manner, it was better and cheaper done."

Mr. Botham detailed next the improved method of making sugar in Batavia, which we have not room to insert here. We may just state, however, that the persons concerned in it never made spirits on the sugar estates. The molasses and skimmings were sent for sale to Batavia, where one distillery might buy the produce of a hundred estates. Here, again, was a vast saving, says Mr. Botham, "there was not, as in the West Indies, a distillery for each estate."

He then proceeded to make a comparison between the agricultural system of the two countries. "The cane was cultivated to the utmost perfection in Batavia, whereas the culture of it in the West Indies was but *in its infancy*. The hoe was scarcely used in the East, whereas it was almost the sole implement in the West. The plough was used instead of it in the East, as far as it could be done. Young canes there were kept also often ploughed as a weeding, and the hoe was kept to weed round the plant when very young; but of this there was little need, if the land had been sufficiently ploughed. When the cane was ready to be earthed up, it was done by a *sort of shovel* made for the purpose. Two persons with this instrument would earth up more canes in a day than ten
Negroes

Negroes with hoes. The cane-roots were also ploughed up in the East, whereas they were dug up with the severest exertion in the West. Many alterations," says Mr. Botham, "are to be made, and expenses and human labour lessened in the West. Having experienced the difference of labourers for profit and labourers from force, I can assert, that the savings by the former are very considerable."

He then pointed out other defects in the West Indian management, and their remedies. "I am of opinion," says he, "that the West Indian planter should for his own interest give more labour to beast and less to man. A larger portion of his estate ought to be in pasture. When practicable, canes should be carried to the mill, and cane-tops and grass to the stock, in waggons. The custom of making a hard-worked Negro get a bundle of grass twice a day should be abolished, and in short a *total change take place in the miserable management in our West Indian Islands*. By these means following as near as possible the East Indian mode, and consolidating the distilleries, I do suppose our sugar-islands might be better worked than they now are by *two-thirds* or indeed *one-half* of the present force. Let it be considered how much labour is lost by the persons *overseeing the forced labourer*, which is saved when he works *for his own profit*. I have stated with the strictest veracity a plain matter of fact, that sugar-estates can be worked cheaper by free men than by slaves*."

I shall now show, that the old maxim, which has been mentioned, is true, when applied to the case of our West Indian islands, by establishing a fact of a very different kind, viz. that the slaves in the West Indies do much more work in a given time when *they work for themselves*, than when *they work for their masters*. But how, it will be said, do you prove, by establishing this fact, that it would be cheaper for our planters to employ free men than slaves? I answer, that, *while the slaves are working for themselves*, they are to be considered, indeed that they are, *bonâ fide, free labourers*. In the first place, they have no driver with them on these occasions; and, in the second place, *having all their earnings to themselves*, they have that stimulus within them to excite industry which belongs peculiarly to *free men*. What is it, I ask, which gives birth to industry in any part of the world, seeing that labour is not agreeable to man, but the stimulus arising from the hope of gain? What makes an English labourer do more work in the day than a

* Mr. Botham's account is confirmed incontrovertibly by the fact, that sugar made in the East Indies can be brought to England (though it has three times the distance to come, and of course three times the freight to pay), and yet be afforded to the consumer at as cheap a rate as any that can be brought thither from the West.

slave,

slave, but the stimulus arising from the knowledge that what he earns is *for himself and not for another*? What, again, makes an English labourer do much more work *by the piece* than *by the day*, but the stimulus arising from the knowledge that he may gain more by the former than by the latter mode of work? Just so is the West Indian slave situated, when *he is working for himself*, that is, when he knows *that what he earns is for his own use*. He has then the stimulus of a free man, and he is, therefore, *during such work* (though unhappily no longer) really, and in effect, and to all intents and purposes, as much a *free labourer* as any person in any part of the globe. But if he be a free man, while he is working for himself, and if in that capacity he does twice or thrice more work than when he works for his master, it follows, that it would be cheaper for his master to employ him as a free labourer, or that the labour of free men in the West Indies would be cheaper than the labour of slaves.

That West Indian slaves, when they work for themselves, do much more in a given time than when they work for their masters, is a fact so notorious in the West Indies, that no one who has been there would deny it. Look at Long's History of Jamaica; The Privy Council Report, Gaisford's Essay on the good Effects of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and other books. Let us hear also what Dr. Dickson, the editor of Mr. Steele, and who resided so many years in Barbadoes, says on the subject; for what he says is so admirably expressed that I cannot help quoting it: "The planters," says he, "do not take the right way to make human beings put forth their strength. They apply main force where they should apply moral motives, and punishments alone where rewards should be judiciously intermixed. They first beslave their poor people with their cursed whip, and then stand and wonder at the tremour of their nerves, and the laxity of their muscles. And yet, strange to tell, *those very men affirm, and affirm truly*, that a slave will do more work for himself *in an afternoon* than he can be made to do for his owner *in a whole day or more!*" And did not the whole Assembly of Grenada, in the evidence they transmitted to the Privy Council, as we collect from the famous speech of Mr. Pitt on the Slave Trade in 1791, affirm the same thing? "He (Mr. Pitt) would show," he said, "the futility of the argument of his honourable friend. His honourable friend had himself admitted, that it was in the power of the colonies to correct the various abuses by which the Negro population was restrained. But they could not do this without *improving the condition of their slaves*, without making them *approximate towards the rank of citizens*, without giving them *some little interest in their labour*, which would occasion them to work *with the energy of men*. But now the Assembly

sembly of Grenada had themselves stated, that, *though the Negroes were allowed the afternoon of only one day in every week, they would do as much work in that afternoon when employed for their own benefit, as in the whole day when employed in their masters' service.* Now after this confession the House might burn all his calculations relative to the Negro population; for if this population had not quite reached the desirable state which he had pointed out, this confession had proved that further supplies were not wanted. A Negro, *if he worked for himself, could do double work.* By an improvement then, in the mode of labour, the work in the islands could be doubled. But if so, what would become of the argument of his honourable friend? for then only half the number of the present labourers were necessary."

But the fact, that the slaves in the West Indies do much more work for themselves in a given time than when they work for their masters, may be established almost arithmetically, if we will take the trouble of calculating from authentic documents which present themselves on the subject. It is surprising, when we look into the evidence examined by the House of Commons on the subject of the Slave Trade, to find how little a West Indian slave really does when he works for his master; and this is confessed equally by the witnesses on both sides of the question. One of them (Mr. Francklyn) says, that a labouring man could not get his bread in Europe if he worked no harder than a Negro. Another (Mr. Tobin), that no Negro works like a day-labourer in England. Another (Sir John Dalling), that the general work of Negroes is not to be called labour. A fourth (Dr. Jackson), that an English labourer does three times as much work as a Negro in the West Indies. Now how are these expressions to be reconciled with the common notions in England of Negro labour? for "to work like a Negro" is a common phrase, which is understood to convey the meaning, that the labour of the Negroes is the most severe and intolerable that is known. One of the witnesses, however, just mentioned explains the matter. "The hardship," says he, "of Negro field-labour is more in the *mode* than in the *quantity* done. The slave, seeing no end of his labour, stands over the work, and only throws the hoe to avoid the lash. He appears to work, without actually working." The truth is, that a Negro, having no interest in his work while working for his master, will work only while the whip is upon him. I can no where make out the clear net annual earnings of a field Negro on a sugar plantation to come up to 8*l.* sterling. Now what does he earn in the course of a year when he is working for himself? I dare not repeat what some of the witnesses for the planters stated to the House of Commons, when representing the enviable condition of the slaves
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in the West Indies ; for this would be to make him earn more for himself in *one day* than for his master in a *week*. Let us take then the lowest sum mentioned in the Book of Evidence. This is stated to be 14*d.* sterling per week ; and 14*d.* sterling per week would make 3*l.* sterling per year. But how many days in the week does he work when he makes such annual earnings ? The most time, which any of the witnesses gives to a field-slave for his own private concerns, is every Sunday, and also every Saturday afternoon in the week, besides three holidays in the year. But this is far from being the general account. Many of them say that he has only Sunday to himself ; and others, that even Sunday is occasionally trespassed upon by his master. It appears, also, that even where the afternoon is given him, it is only out of crop-time. Now let us take into the account the time lost by slaves in going backwards and forwards to their provision-grounds ; for though some of these are described as being only a stone's throw from their huts, others are described as being one, and two, and three, and even four miles off ; and let us take into the account, also, that Sunday is, by the confession of all, the Negro market day, on which alone they can dispose of their own produce, and that the market itself may be from one to ten or fifteen miles from their homes, and that they who go there cannot be working in their gardens at the same time ; and we shall find that there cannot be on an average more than a clear three quarters of a day in the week, which they can call their own, and in which they can work for themselves. But call it a whole day, if you please, and you will find that the slave does for himself in this one day more than a third of what he does for his master in six ; or that he works *more than three times harder when he works for himself* than when *he works for his master*.

I have now shown, first by the evidence of Mr. Botham, and secondly by the fact of Negroes earning more in a given time when they work in their own gardens, than when they work in their master's service, that the old maxim "*of its being cheaper to employ free men than slaves,*" is true, when applied to the *operations and demands of West Indian agriculture*. But if it be cheaper to employ free men than slaves in the West Indies, then they, who should emancipate their Negroes there, would *promote their interest by so doing*. "But hold !" says an objector, "we allow that their successors would be benefited, but not the *emancipators themselves*. These would have a great sacrifice to make. Their slaves are worth so much money at this moment ; but they would lose all this value, if they were to set them free. I reply, and indeed I have all along affirmed, that it is not proposed to emancipate the slaves *at once*, but to prepare them for emancipation *in a course of years*. Mr. Steele did not make his slaves *entirely free*. They

were *copyhold-bond slaves*. They were still *his property* : and they would, if he had lived, have continued so for many years. They therefore, who should emancipate, would lose nothing of the value of their slaves, so long as they brought them only to the door of liberty, but did not allow them to pass through it. But suppose they were to allow them to pass through it and thus admit them to freedom, they would lose nothing by so doing ; for they would not admit them to freedom till *after a certain period of years, during which* I contend that the *value of every individual slave* would have been *reimbursed* to them from *the increased income of their estates*. Mr. Steele, as we have seen, *more than tripled* the value of his income during his experiment : I believe that he more than quadrupled it ; for he says, that he more than tripled it, *besides increasing his stock, and laying out large sums annually in adding necessary works, and in repairs of the damage by the great hurricane*. Suppose then a West India estate to yield at this moment a net income of 500*l.* per annum, this income would be increased, according to Mr. Steele's experience, to somewhere about 1700*l.* per annum. Would not, then, the surplus beyond the original 500*l.*, viz. 1200*l.* per annum, be sufficient to reimburse the proprietor in a few years for the value of every slave which he had when he began his plan of emancipation ? But he would be reimbursed again, that is, (twice over on the whole for every individual slave,) from a new source, viz. *the improved value of his land*. It is a fact well known in the United States, that a certain quantity of land, or farm, in full cultivation by free men, will fetch twice more money than the same quantity of land, similarly circumstanced, in full cultivation by slaves. Let us suppose, then, that the slaves at present on any West Indian plantation are worth about as much as the land with the buildings upon it, to which they are attached, and that the land with the buildings upon it would rise to double its former value when cultivated by free men ; it follows that the land and buildings alone would be worth as much then, that is, when worked by free labourers, as the land, buildings, and slaves together are worth at the present time.

I have now, I think, pretty well canvassed the subject, and I shall therefore hasten to a conclusion. And first, I ask the West Indians, whether they think that they will be allowed to carry on their present cruel system, the arbitrary use of the whip and the chain, and the brutal debasement of their fellow creatures, *for ever*. I say, No ; I entertain better hopes of the humanity and justice of the British people. I am sure that they will interfere, and that when they *once take up the cause, they will never abandon it till they have obtained their object*. And what is it, after all, that I have been proposing in the course of the preceding pages ? Two things

things only, viz. that the laws relating to the slaves may be revised by the British Parliament, so that they may be made (as it was always intended) *to accord with, and not to be repugnant to*, the principles of the British Constitution, and that, when such an evasion shall have taken place, the slaves may be put into *a state of preparation for emancipation*; and for such an emancipation as may be shown to be compatible with the joint interests of the master and the slave. Is there any thing unreasonable in this proposition? Is it unreasonable to desire that those laws should be repealed, which are contrary to the laws of God; or that the Africans and their descendants, who have the shape, image, intellect, feelings, and affections of men, should be treated as human beings?

The measure then, which I have been proposing, is *not unreasonable*; and I am confident it *would not be injurious* to the interests of the West Indians themselves. These are at present, it is said, in great distress; and so they have been for years; and so they will still be (and moreover they will be getting worse and worse) *so long as they continue slavery*. How can such a wicked, such an ill-framed system succeed? Has not the Almighty in his moral government of the world stamped a character upon human actions, and given such a turn to their operations, that the balance should be ultimately in favour of virtue? Has he not taken from those, who act wickedly, the power of discerning the right path? or has he not so confounded their faculties, that they are for ever frustrating their own schemes? It is only to know the practice of our planters to be assured, that it will bring on difficulty after difficulty, and loss after loss, till it will end in ruin. If a man were to sit down and to try to invent a ruinous system of agriculture, could he devise one more to his mind than that which they have been in the habit of using? Let us look at some of the more striking parts of this system. The first that stares us in the face, is the unnatural and destructive practice of *forced labour*. Here we see men working without any rational stimulus to elicit their exertions, and therefore they must be followed by drivers with whips in their hands. Well might it be said by Mr. Botham to the Committees of Privy-council and House of Commons, "Let it be considered, how much labour is lost by the persons overseeing the forced labourer, which is saved when he works for his own profit;" and, notwithstanding all the vigilance and whipping of these drivers, I have proved that the slaves do more for themselves in an afternoon, than in a whole day when they work for their masters. It was doubtless the conviction that *forced labour was unprofitable*, as well as that there would be less of human suffering, which made Mr. Steele take away the whips from his

tolerable hardship upon those who have to perform it, as an improvident waste of strength and time. Why are not horses, or mules, or oxen, and carts or other vehicles of convenience, used oftener on such occasions? I may notice also that cruel and most disadvantageous mode of employment of making Negroes collect grass for the cattle, by picking it by the hand blade by blade. Are no artificial grasses to be found in our islands, and is the existence of the scythe unknown there? But it is of no use to dwell longer upon this subject. The whole system is a ruinous one from the beginning to the end. And from whence does such a system arise? It has its origin in *slavery* alone. It is practised nowhere but in the land of ignorance and slavery. Slavery indeed, or rather the despotism which supports slavery, has no compassion, and it is one of its characteristics *never to think of sparing the sinews of the wretched creature called a slave*. Hence it is slow to adopt helps, with which a beneficent Providence has furnished us, by giving to man an inventive faculty for easing his burthens, or by submitting the beasts of the field to his dominion and his use, and it flies to expedients which are contrary to nature and reason. How then can such a system ever answer? Were an English farmer to have recourse to such a system, he would not be able to pay his rent for a single year. If the planters then are in distress, it is their *own fault*. They may, however, thank the abolitionists that they are not worse off than they are at present. The abolition of the slave trade, by cutting off the purchase of new slaves, has cut off one cause of their ruin *; and it is only the *abolition of slavery which can yet save them*. Had the planters, when the slave trade was abolished, taken immediate measures to meet the change; had they then revised their laws and substituted better; had they then put their slaves into a state of preparation for emancipation,—in what a much more desirable situation would they have been at this moment! In fact, *nothing can save them, but the abolition of slavery on a wise and prudent plan*. Take away from the planters the use and practice of slavery, and the hour of *their prosperity* would be begun. Can we doubt that Providence would then bless their endeavours, and that *deliverance* from their difficulties would be their portion in the end?

It has appeared, I hope, by this time, that what I have been proposing is not unreasonable, and that so far from being injurious to the interests of the planters, it would be highly advantageous to them. I shall now show, that I do not ask for the introduction of a more humane system into our Colonies *at a time when it*

* Dickson's Mitigation of Slavery, p. 213, where it is proved that bought slaves never refund their purchase-money to their owners.

would

but ninety-nine out of every hundred Negroes in St. Domingo are aware that they cannot obtain necessities without work. They know that it is their duty to work, and they are even desirous of working; but the remembrance of their cruel sufferings in the time of slavery renders them suspicious." We may conclude, then, that if a cruel discipline *was not necessary* in the years 1790 and 1794, to which these gentlemen allude, when there must have been *many thousands of newly imported Africans* both in St. Domingo and in the English Colonies, it cannot be necessary *now*, when there have been no importations into the latter for *fifteen years*. There can be no excuse, then, for the English planters for not altering their system, and this *immediately*. It is, on the other hand, a great reproach to them, considering the quality and character of their slaves, *that they should not of themselves have come forward on the subject before this time*.

Seeing then that nothing has been done where it ought, it is the duty of the abolitionists to *resume their labours*. If through the medium of the abolition of the slave trade they have not accomplished, as they expected, the whole of their object, they have no alternative but to resort to *other measures*, or to attempt by constitutional means, under that Legislature which has already sanctioned their efforts, the mitigation of the cruel treatment of the Negroes, with the ultimate view of extinguishing, in due time and in a suitable manner, slavery itself. Nor ought any time to be lost in making such an attempt; for it is a melancholy fact, that there is a decrease of the slave population in our islands at the present moment. What other proof need we require *of the severity of the slavery there, and of the necessity of its mitigation?* Severe punishments, want of sufficient food, labour extracted by the whip, and a system of prostitution, conspire, *almost as much as ever*, to make inroads upon the constitutions of the slaves, and to prevent their increase. And let it be remembered here, that any former defect of this kind was supplied by importations; but that importations *are now unlawful*. Unless, therefore, the abolitionists interfere, and that soon, our West Indian planters may come to Parliament and say, "We have now tried your experiment. It has not answered. You must therefore give us leave to go again to the coast of Africa for slaves." There is also another consideration worthy of the attention of the abolitionists, viz. that a *public attempt* made in England to procure the abolition of *slavery* would very much promote their original object, the cause of the abolition of the slave trade; for foreign courts have greatly doubted our sincerity as to the latter measure; and have therefore been very backward in giving us their assistance in it. If England, say they, abolished the slave trade *from moral*

moral motives, how happens it *that she continues slavery*? But if this *public attempt* were to succeed, then the abolitionists would see their wishes in a direct train for completion: for if slavery were to fall in the British islands, this event would occasion death in a given time, and without striking any further blow, to the execrable trade in every part of the world; because those foreigners, who should continue slavery, no longer able to compete in the markets with those who should employ free men, must abandon the slave trade altogether.

But here perhaps the planters will say, "What right have the people of England to interfere with *our property*, which would be the case if they were to attempt to abolish slavery?" The people of England might reply, that they have as good a right as you, the planters, have to interfere with that most precious of all property, *the liberty of your slaves*, seeing that *you hold them by no right that is not opposed to nature, reason, justice, and religion*. The people of England have no desire to interfere with your *property*, but with your *oppression*. It is probable that your property would be improved by the change. But, to examine this right more minutely, I contend, first, that they have always a right to interfere in behalf of humanity and justice wherever their appeals can be heard. I contend, secondly, that they have a more immediate right to interfere in the present case, because the oppressed persons in question, living in the British dominions and under the British Government, are *their fellow subjects*. I contend again, that they have this right upon the ground that they are giving you, the West Indians, *a monopoly for their sugar*, by buying it from you exclusively at *a much dearer rate than they can get it from other quarters*. Surely they have a right to say to you, as customers for your produce, Change your system and we will continue to deal with you; but if you will not change it, we will buy our sugar elsewhere, or we will not buy sugar at all. The East Indian market is open to us, and we prefer sugar that is not stained with blood. Nay, we will petition Parliament to take off the surplus duty with which East Indian sugar is loaded on your account. What superior claims have you either upon Parliament or upon us, that you should have the preference? As to the East Indians, they are as much the subjects of the British empire as yourselves. As to the East India Company, they support all their establishments, both civil and military, at their own expense. They come to our Treasury for nothing; while you, with naval stations, and an extraordinary military force maintained for no other purpose than to keep in awe an injured population, and with heavy bounties on the exportation of your sugar, put us to such an expense as makes us doubt whether your trade is worth having on its present

present terms. They, the East India Company, again, have been a blessing to the Natives with whom they have been concerned. They distribute an equal system of law and justice to all, without respect of persons. They dispel the clouds of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and carry with them civilization and liberty wherever they go. You, on the other hand, have no code of justice *but for yourselves*. You *deny it* to those who *cannot help themselves*. You *hinder liberty* by your cruel restrictions on manumission ; and dreading the inlet of light, *you study to perpetuate ignorance and barbarism*. Which then of the two competitors has the claim to preference by an English Parliament and an English People ? It may probably soon become a question with the latter, whether they will consent to pay a million annually more for West India sugar than for other of like quality, or, which is the same thing, whether they will allow themselves to be *taxed annually to the amount of a million sterling to support West Indian slavery ! !*

I shall now conclude by saying, that I leave it, and that I recommend it, to others to add to the light which I have endeavoured to furnish on this subject, by collecting new facts relative to Emancipation and the result of it in other parts of the world, as well as relative to the superiority of free over servile labour, in order that the West Indians may be convinced, if possible, that they would be benefited by the change of system which I propose. They must already know, both by past and present experience, that the ways of unrighteousness are not profitable. Let them not doubt, since the Almighty has decreed the balance in favour of virtuous actions, that their efforts under the new system will work together for their good.

THE END.



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*List of Publications containing important Information on
the general Subject of Slavery—viz.*

Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Negro Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies, 1784.

Debates on the Slave Trade, 1791, 1792, 1806, and 1807.

Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents, 1807.

Pinckard's Notes on the West Indies, 1815.

Collins's Professional Planter, 1804.

Dickson's Mitigation of Slavery, 1814.

Watson's Defence of the Methodist Missions in the West Indies, 1816.

Report of the African Institution on Reasons for a Registry of Slaves, 1815.

Review of the Colonial Registry Bills by the African Institution, 1820.

Sixteenth Annual Report of the African Institution, 1822.

Stephen's Letters to Wilberforce on the Registry of Slaves, 1816.

Cropper's Letters to Wilberforce, 1822.

Singleton's Report of the State of Sierra Leone, 1822.

Pamphleteer, No. XVI., containing Coster on the Amelioration of Slavery, 1816.

Wilberforce's Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire on behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies, 1823.

Negro Slavery, as it exists in the United States and in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica, 1823.

Cropper's Letter on the Injurious Effects of High Prices and the Beneficial Effects of Low Prices on the Condition of Slavery, 1823.

Hodgson's Letter to Say, on the comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour, 1823.

East and West India Sugar, 1823.

Proceedings in the House of Commons, on Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope, 1822.

Declaration of the Objects of the Liverpool Society for Abolishing Slavery, 1823.

Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, with a view to their ultimate Emancipation; and on the Practicability, the Safety, and the Advantages of the latter Measure. By T. Clarkson, Esq. 1824.

A Review of some of the Arguments which are commonly advanced against Parliamentary Interference in behalf of the Negro Slaves; with a Statement of Opinions which have been expressed on that Subject by many of our most distinguished Statesmen, including Earl Grey, Earl of Liverpool, Lord Grenville, Lord Dudley and Ward, Lord Melville, Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. &c. 1823.

Substance of the Debate in the House of Commons, on the 15th May, 1823, on a Motion for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions; with a Preface and Appendixes, containing Facts and Reasonings illustrative of Colonial Bondage, 1823.

(6) from Dr Tucker

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

GEORGE HIBBERT, ESQ., AND THE REV. T. COOPER,

RELATIVE TO THE CONDITION

OF

THE NEGRO SLAVES IN JAMAICA,

EXTRACTED FROM THE MORNING CHRONICLE:

ALSO,

A LIBEL

ON THE CHARACTER OF MR. AND MRS. COOPER,

PUBLISHED, IN 1823, IN SEVERAL OF THE

JAMAICA JOURNALS ;

WITH NOTES AND REMARKS.

BY THOMAS COOPER.

" Truth will ultimately prevail, even though he who uttered it should be destroyed."—Dr. V. KNOX.

—————

London :

SOLD BY J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY, AND
LUPTON RELFE, 13, CORNHILL

1824.

Price Two Shillings.

PREFACE.

My only motives in presenting the public with a connected view of the Correspondence which has recently taken place, in the *Morning Chronicle*, between Mr. George Hibbert and myself, relative to the Report I have given of what I saw of the Slaves and Slave System during a residence of more than three years in Jamaica, are, that they may have an opportunity of judging, without any very great expense either of time or trouble, on which side the truth lies. Mr. H.'s main object appears to have been, to shake, and, if possible, destroy the credit of my testimony as to the cruel, immoral, and irreligious nature and tendency of that state of oppression under which the children of Africa have, for so many ages, been doomed to suffer in our West-India colonies.

That my opponent should wish the public to believe that Negro Slavery is perfectly consistent with justice, humanity, Christianity, and sound policy, is, when all things are considered, not surprising. I believe he never saw the thing for himself; and, as he regarded the abolition of the Slave-trade as an impolitic and unnecessary measure, he cannot be expected to view an attack on Slavery itself with a friendly eye. That he should sift my statements, or those of a similar nature from any other individual, to the bottom, was nothing more than I would, had I been requested, have assisted him to do. Truth, notwithstanding his representations to the contrary, is alone my object; and where I am wrong, I most sincerely desire to be corrected. I repeat, I have no interests to serve but those of justice and humanity; and

CORRESPONDENCE,

&c.

TO JOHN BULL.

SIR,

THE letter which you will find at foot, addressed to the Rev. Thomas Cooper, appeared in the *Times* newspaper of the 3d inst. and has been copied into other daily prints. Considering the great importance which has been attributed to the statements of Mr. Cooper, respecting the treatment of the slaves in Jamaica, the questions of "An Enquirer" merit surely a reply, which I do not find they have as yet received from any quarter. The Rev. Gentleman should at least inform us, whether he avows and confirms *all* that the author of "*Negro Slavery*" has (declaredly under his authority) given to the public in pages 46 to 71 of that pamphlet.

An attentive comparison of Mr. Cooper's letters in the "*Monthly Repository*" with the portion of that pamphlet I have referred to, will afford ground for suspicion that the pictures he drew have occasionally been coloured by the pamphleteer. Mr. Cooper has not, perhaps, been aware, that while his object was simply to impute the "*total failure*" of his mission (he knows that I use his own words) to causes which it was not in his power to controul, the party with whom he now appears to be connected, have views far more extensive. *Their* compassionate regard for the slaves in the West Indies, *their* zeal for the religious

He (or some one in his name) has assigned causes for the "total failure" of his mission, which are injurious to the reputation of the White inhabitants of that island—they may be able to shew other sufficient causes for that failure, and to prove the existence of those causes.

AN ENQUIRER.

TO THE REVEREND THOMAS COOPER.

REV. SIR,

Your letters in the "*Monthly Repository*," and the Report which it is presumed you have authorised to be made by the author of the pamphlet entitled "*Negro Slavery*," of your observations and experience in Jamaica, have excited much attention. Your statements are applauded by the pamphleteer above-mentioned, in terms which must satisfy your self-estimation; they are, he tells us, "admirably dispassionate, display no feelings of irritation towards the planters, but, on the contrary, manifest a candour which does you honour," &c.

And it is very true, Reverend Sir, that you have conveyed your reprobation of Jamaica slave-government in terms of plausibility, and with much semblance of candour. But let us for a moment consider your situation: you had been patronised by Mr. Hibbert under circumstances which made it convenient to you to be so; and you have been (as on good authority I understand) treated with uniform kindness and liberality by that gentleman: you could not, therefore, in common decency, withhold the fact that he had ordered an estate, reported to him to be competent to produce an average crop of 400 hogshheads of sugar, to return him only 300 hogshheads; and it might escape you to com-

This you must answer for me. — I do not anticipate your reply ; but I can tell you, that although Mr. Hibbert believes that you have misrepresented and exaggerated much, yet something did reach him, or strike his representative in the island, which caused the overseer who was on the estate during your residence, to be discharged—not through you, or through any representation of yours, but a considerable time before your observations upon the management of Mr. Hibbert's estate were known to that gentleman.

Pray tell me, however, whether, on your arrival in this country, you was invited to visit Mr. Hibbert at his seat at East Hide, and whether you then intimated to him (of whose humanity you needed no proof) the abuses which you had seen committed on this estate ?

Will you say "No ! I remembered what Mr. Hibbert had said about the jealousy of the White servants," &c. ? Recollect, Rev. Sir, you had quitted Jamaica, to return thither no more ; and tell me whether Mr. Hibbert did or did not at that time hold out to you language to this effect : — "Mr. Cooper, there is now no more need of reserve betwixt us ; although you did not write to me, you may now freely communicate in conversation. Have you any thing interesting to say to me respecting the conduct of my estate, and the comforts and instructions of my Negroes ?" And was it not your reply, "That you had nothing of that import to communicate" ?

You are reported by the pamphleteer "not to recollect having seen a single White man in Jamaica, who shewed any serious concern about religion, excepting some Missionaries." (*Negro Slavery*, p. 53.) Does the pamphleteer, in this instance, misrepresent you ? If so, in how many other instances has he done the same ? The assertion is a very strong one. I wish to learn whether you ever com-

communicated with any ministers of the Established Church, and if not, what kept you at a distance from them? But you speak only from your recollection. Tell me, then, was you not well acquainted with Mr. Samuel Vaughan, (a White man, certainly, and no Missionary,) a planter, residing in St. James's? Was your intimacy with that gentleman so great, as to form a striking incident during your residence in Jamaica? Did you never converse with him upon religious subjects, and upon the means of enlightening the Negroes? Did you correspond with him on those subjects, and would you choose that the public should learn the particulars of that correspondence? This, indeed, you may say, is but a single instance of your want of recollection; but your acquaintance with White men of the higher classes, not Missionaries, was, perhaps, not extensive; and with none more familiar than with Mr. Vaughan; and can you think it right, that either you, or your friend the pamphleteer, should so lightly, and I may add so falsely, insinuate a charge of irreligion upon that Society, whether large or small, with which you had lived in Jamaica?

Whether you notice these queries or not, you may possibly hear from me again; but upon the purport of your reply, (should you make one,) will depend what I shall have farther to address to you.*

AN ENQUIRER.

* Immediately on being acquainted with the appearance of the above letter, I sent a reply to the *Times*, in which the *Queries*, &c., were first published, stating my willingness to comply with the Enquirer's wishes, on condition that he would give his name. I take it for granted that the Editor of that paper received my note, though he had not the fairness to give it a place in his columns. This being the case, I applied to the *Chronicle*, and in a few days my note appeared; when Mr. Hibbert avowed himself to be the Enquirer; and hence the following correspondence.

T. C.

TO GEORGE HIBBERT, ESQ.

SIR,

I see, by *The Times* of the 7th instant, that you are the individual who has recently addressed me, in several of the public prints, under the signature of "*An Enquirer*," respecting the part I have felt it my duty to act towards the Negro and other slaves in Jamaica, since my return from that island in 1821.

1. You tell me, "I had been patronised by Mr. Hibbert under circumstances which made it convenient to me to be so." Do you mean by this, that Mr. H. conferred a favour on me by sending me and my wife out to his estate in Jamaica? If so, we differ in opinion. The humanity, benevolence, and purity of his intentions, no one can venerate more highly than I do; and, with his accustomed liberality, he spared no expense which seemed necessary to render my undertaking successful. The whole must have cost him a heavy sum; yet my gains were so small, that I cannot but feel surprised that you should have thought it worth your while to advertise them in a newspaper. I once more thank Mr. Hibbert for all his kindness; and if you deem it important that the world should know which was the obliged party, it might be well to call for a public statement of accounts.

2. You think me ungenerous in not making public *all* the instances "of Mr. Hibbert's regard for his Negroes" which came within my knowledge. It was deemed sufficient to give Mr. H., as I have ever done both publicly and privately, the fullest credit for humanity and generosity; but, as you seem to wish it, I have much pleasure in recording the following particulars:—The crop on Georgia was not only reduced from 400 to 300 hogsheads, but the slaves on this estate were often eased in their labour by the assistance of

ness and ferocity; while I am not sure that it does appear less so there than on estates in general. This estate, after all that can be said, is afflicted with the common curse of the West Indies. To shew the influence of slavery on other estates, as well as on Georgia, I shall be excused for introducing the following case, which happened on a neighbouring estate, and to which I was in part an eye-witness:—The White mason, who was doing a job near the overseer's house, immediately on going to his gang after dinner, gave to one of his Black workmen (John Campbell, I believe, was his name) a flogging. The sound of the whip was very distinctly heard in the house where I was sitting with a small company of White men, without producing any particular impression on the minds of those persons. A few minutes after, I went out with the overseer to the scene of this flogging. My companion interfered with the work, and thereby offended the mason,—but merely remarked to the poor man whose person was exposed to full view, lacerated and bleeding, “John Campbell, I can give you another sore—to-morrow.” The poor fellow answered, “*Yes, Massa, me know dat.*”

4. You are quite right, Sir, in supposing that I was to correspond with Mr. Frend on the general purposes of my mission, but totally wrong in insinuating that I was expected to transmit to that gentleman any accounts of “the atrocities” of the slave system. Our letters would shew this, not to mention the extreme unlikelihood of the parties acting on a system of *espionage*.

5. You tell me, that Mr. Hibbert believes that I have misrepresented and exaggerated much. Be so good, Sir, as to point out the particular instances of my guilt. The overseer, who was sent off the estate during my residence upon it, certainly was not discharged through any representations of mine. It was no part of my duty, but contrary to my duty

the conduct of Mr. H.'s estate, my answer was, "No;" and that is still my answer. I do not recollect the exact words which were employed at the time the question was put; but the meaning was, whether I had observed any thing peculiar in the management of his slaves. I knew of nothing peculiar, and therefore had nothing to say, otherwise than that slavery appeared on Georgia to be the same thing that it is on other estates. Even at this time, Mr. H. expressed a wish not to hear any thing as to the general condition of the slaves, that being well known to him. I, however, did offer to get the whip of his head driver, which was then in my portmanteau, but he declined seeing it. I then offered to give it to him, but he refused to accept of it.

7. As to the religious character of the White inhabitants, my statements are general; and if you are determined to insist on the examination of individuals, there is no alternative but to proceed. In the mean time, allow me to advise you to re-peruse Chap. 11 of Stewart's "*View of Jamaica*." I have no objection to your publishing the correspondence which took place between Mr. S. Vaughan and myself.

8. In conclusion, I repeat what I have in effect so often declared, viz. that Georgia has not been singled out as an estate on which the slave system appears with peculiar atrocity; and that the facts brought forward in my evidence are regarded "as a fair specimen of what might be found on estates in general."

THOMAS COOPER.

Newcastle, Jan. 14, 1824.

P. S. I omitted to state, that, on my return to this country, I gave Mr. Frend a full account of what I saw of the evils of the slave system. I shewed him the whip, and described the manner in which punishments are administered, and brought forward some, if not all the cases mentioned in "*Negro Slavery*."

T. C.

coveting distinction in this respect, is anxious not to be supposed to claim merit for sacrifices which he has not actually made. He was contented to receive 300 hogsheads of sugar from an estate which was said to be capable of producing 400; but he assures me that he was, and is well convinced, that the last-mentioned quantity could not be obtained, excepting by means quite as unwise as oppressive, and such as no considerate planter would resort to.

You resided upon Georgia upwards of three years, for the purpose of cultivating among the slaves sentiments of morality and religion; and, upon your return to this country, you pronounced that your mission had turned out "a total failure."

It might fail by the fault of others, or through circumstances which you could not controul.

It might possibly fail (perhaps you will admit) through the nature of the means used by you, or the degree of skill and diligence with which they were applied; and, of course, it might fail by a joint operation of these causes.

Could I have believed that the Reports you have published and sanctioned concerning this mission, had been conceived and written with a fair and candid spirit, you would not have been in any shape addressed by me. With your religious opinions I have nothing to do, excepting so far as a reference to them may serve to correct that conclusion which you mean to impress upon your readers, that in no one instance has your want of success been owing to any deficiency or fault of yours, but entirely to that state of society in the colony, or to those regulations on Georgia estate which opposed, as you allege, insuperable obstacles to your progress. It is not to be wondered at, that after an undertaking, which cost to my relative, as you say, "a heavy sum," and of which, after more than three years' perseverance, the result was so discouraging, you should en-

ger of exciting them to insurrection ; and one would imagine that, in such a dilemma, your philanthropy would have been contented with a very slow, if sure, progress in instruction.

Mr. Hibbert has always contended, (as Euelpis seems also to maintain,) that without teaching them even to read, some useful and moral and religious impressions may be made upon the minds of Negro slaves ; and, anxious as you shew yourself to prove that you had not time for this task, it yet appears, from your own account, that for making some progress in it, opportunities were not wanting ; and you cannot but know, that when Negroes are sick, or, as it often happens, are permitted, from very slight causes, to rest in the hospital, there are, at all such times, very favourable moments for cultivating among a portion of them moral and religious sentiments.

Mr. Hibbert acknowledges that upon inquiry, he finds that his water-mill was occasionally put about upon a Sunday evening, and when he heard of the practice, he immediately ordered it to be discontinued.

Although he is of opinion, that you sometimes confound the just punishment of crime with cruelty, insinuating that both are the evil results of slavery, yet he will not admit that some of the cases you have related, are not (if faithfully represented) cases of atrocity, such as if reported to him, would have met his indignant reprobation, and have roused his attention to prevent their repetition ; but he believes that in the Report you have published, you have occasionally exaggerated, and mentions, as instances, what you state as to the absolute dominion of an overseer over the slaves, the small value attached to good character and moral qualities in a slave, the hardships of labour, and almost total want of rest in crop time ; the little attention paid to pregnant females ; and the frequent occurrence of the removal of slaves from one part of the island to another at a great distance.

In these respects it would be an easy matter to prove that the picture you have drawn is not faithful, but the discussion would too much lengthen this letter.

It was not candid in you to omit, in your early report, to state the fact that the overseer, who was on Georgia during two years and a half of your residence there, and who was esteemed to be a most skilful planter, was discharged six months before you quitted the estate, and not in consequence of any representation made by you; and you might have told us whether the general appearance of the slaves was or was not, in your opinion, bettered by the change; and this I the rather press, as Mr. Oates, the attorney of Mr. Hibbert, in whose scrupulous veracity I have the highest confidence, affirms that, before you quitted the estate, you several times declared, in his hearing, "that the Negroes were a very happy peasantry, indeed much better off than many of the labouring classes in England, and that their houses were, on many estates, far more comfortable than the cottages at home."

It is the aim of your Report to represent, that what you saw at Georgia presents a flattering picture of the general condition of the Negroes in Jamaica—"that this estate was one as likely as any other to have been selected in order to convey the most favourable representation of Negro bondage," &c. &c. &c. Now this, with your knowledge of the overseer's dismissal, is not fair; nor can we learn from your Report, that your personal examination of different estates in various parts of so large an island as Jamaica, warrants you in any such conclusion. Your excuses for not communicating to Mr. Hibbert, by means of Mr. Frend, whatever you observed amiss in the treatment of his Negroes, are very unsatisfactory. You were desired to correspond with Mr. Frend for the very purpose of your escaping the imputation of *espionage* (I use your own term): and, under the

difficulties of applying a cure to all the evils which you state as belonging to slavery, what better could a preacher of the gospel and a friend of humanity do, than to become instrumental in promoting the immediate comfort of the slaves, and in averting from them all unnecessary hardships, instilling, in the mean time, into their minds, on every opportunity which could be seized, safe and valuable instruction?

But concerning the treatment of the slaves, you were totally silent until your return to England; and even then, instead of communicating to Mr. Hibbert what especially related to his estate, you offered general remarks upon the evils of the system—evils which, by your own admission, can only be safely corrected with the utmost caution, and by very slow degrees.

I have had access to the contents of two letters from you, addressed to Mr. Samuel Vaughan, dated the 11th November, 1820, and 20th March, 1821. Mr. Vaughan is well known as an eminent planter, and as a humane man, anxious, as many other planters are, to impress upon the slaves useful, moral, and religious instruction. Mr. Oates introduced you to Mr. Vaughan purposely, that you might confer with him upon the best means of accomplishing the object of your mission. These letters I will publish, if you desire it. They are, in my opinion, very creditable to your motives and to your zeal. They are referred to by me, because, to my conviction, they establish two facts:—

1st. That the assertion which you have sanctioned, that “you do not recollect to have seen a single White man in Jamaica who shewed any serious concern about religion, excepting some Missionaries,” (if your memory deserve any confidence whatever,) cannot be correctly true.

2d. That “your peculiar views of gospel truth,” whatever be their foundation in gospel and in truth, are, unfortunately, ill adapted to your purpose of converting to Chris-

account of my late undertaking on his estate? He expresses in his reply, which is now before me, his concurrence in my design, and promises to procure the *Monthly Repository*, with a view to read what I might write. At length I fulfilled my promise, quite expecting, that as he professed to be one of my readers, he would not fail, if he saw any thing in my report which he thought objectionable, to point it out to me, in a friendly and candid manner. As soon as "*Negro Slavery*" came out, I, from an anxiety that he should have the earliest opportunity of examining my evidence, caused a copy to be sent him. All this was done considerably more than a year ago, and yet he never condescended to favour me, in any manner whatever, with his opinion, till your attack came forth, of the propriety of my proceedings, or the nature of my account. If he wished for my confidence exclusively, why did he assure me of his high approbation when I proposed writing for the public eye? And why has so long a time been allowed to elapse without his objections making their appearance? And why have they now been started by you in the public prints—and that too in the most invidious light? I have no interests to serve but those of justice, truth, and humanity, and it is for the public to decide whether you have convicted me of injustice and unfairness. If I have given West-India slavery a bad name, I have produced facts to justify my conduct. And I ask you whether it is not by this latter practice, and by this alone, that I have given the offence? I might, I feel persuaded, have sounded my opinions from one end of the island to another, peaceably enough, had I not published the grounds and reasons of them.

2. You may see, by my letter in *The Repository* for December 1822, that "I give the planters, as a body, the fullest credit for a desire to make the slaves as happy as they can be made in a state of complete servitude." I assail

them not for gratuitous cruelty, but for their apparent determination to eternize a system, which I must still regard as intrinsically tyrannical, cruel, and immoral. I despise the practice of condemning the planters, or even the abolitionists, "*en masse*," and should greatly rejoice to see the parties forsake personalities, and confine themselves to facts.

3. I have no recollection of stating, "on my return to this country, that my mission turned out a total failure," and should be glad to know on what authority you state that I did.

4. I utterly disclaim ever having had the least intention, in what I have written and sanctioned, of covering any conscious neglect in the discharge of the duties of my mission. I have written, not with a view to injure any one, excepting so far as some may deem it an injury to themselves to have any part of the evils of the slave system pointed out—but solely to serve the cause of an oppressed and shamefully-neglected people. I feel a satisfaction in what I have done, notwithstanding the attempts on both sides the Atlantic to hunt me down.

5. In one of your letters, addressed to *John Bull*, I observed the following passage :—"I wish Mr. Cooper to understand that I have no intention to assail him on the score of his religious opinions, *be they what they may* ; nor, as to the inquiries before us, is it of any import whether his late employer was acquainted with those opinions, singular as they may be." How does this agree with the kind of reference you have made to my religious opinions in your last letter ? Mr. Hibbert knew, at the time he engaged me to go out to Jamaica, that I was a *Unitarian*. He knows that he removed me from *Moretonhampstead, in Devonshire*, where I was the Minister of a *Unitarian Congregation*. In giving a history of my mission I can have no objection to an explanation of my creed, and had I imagined that you, or

any one else, attached the least importance to this being done, it should not have been passed over thus long. But you have a document to publish, illustrative of this point, and therefore it may be as well for me to withhold my confession until you have done so.

6. I think it would be no more than fair to prove, as well as to insinuate, that the cases of punishment, &c., brought forward in "*Negro Slavery*," are "unfaithfully represented." They are, doubtless, atrocious enough, when compared with what working people in this country experience for neglect of their work ; but they have not been proved to be so when compared with the usual course of events on a sugar estate in Hanover, Jamaica. What is a mere whipping amongst Negro slaves ? Cases of *atrocious* would, I apprehend, be of the following kind—a Negro who has been heavily whipped, or otherwise ill-treated by his overseer, goes to his attorney to complain, who being satisfied of the justness of the complaint, gives him a note back to the overseer, that he may be favourably received, and sent quietly to work. This offends the overseer, who takes the note, fastens it to the punishable parts of the man or woman, boy or girl, and orders the driver to whip on till the paper is destroyed. I do not mean to say that I ever witnessed a scene of this kind, or that they are of frequent occurrence ; but I do mean to say, that I firmly believe they happen ; and that I could quote testimony in their favour, which would satisfy you. Other facts, of an equally barbarous nature, might be adduced ; and yet it is a piece of effrontery so great for an Englishman, living in England, to cry out against Negro Slavery, that he ought to lose his character for his crime. Mr. Hibbert must excuse my not retracting any thing I have said respecting the "absolute dominion of an overseer." This officer, I must still consider as a complete despot ; against whose decision there is, in ninety-nine cases

of the island to another. The gang on Georgia was, I believe, made up chiefly of slaves purchased of different persons, some of whom resided at a very considerable distance from the plantation.

7. I certainly had nothing to do with the discharge of Mr. Hibbert's overseer, and if I had had, that very circumstance would now be referred to as affording a leading cause of the non-success of my mission. It would now be said, that I, who presumed to interfere with the concerns of the White people, could expect nothing but disappointment. But you think I ought, at least, to have told the world, that in spite of your relative's best endeavours, it was, owing to the misconduct of his overseer, a peculiar hardship to be a slave on his estate. But this would have been going too far; for I never heard it so represented, but firmly believe, that, all things considered, the Negroes on Georgia were quite as well off as the slaves on any estate in the neighbourhood. The dismissed overseer was a man of strong mind, well acquainted with his business, though, no doubt, a strict disciplinarian. He was employed on this estate nearly twenty years, at least fifteen of which he was overseer. During this period the estate had four or five attorneys, one of whom, a most successful planter, gave him the charge of an estate soon after Mr. Oates sent him away. I am not aware that any very mighty improvement took place after this celebrated dismissal of an old servant; the whips and the drivers, and the stocks and despotism, were left behind; slavery remained to oppress the poor Blacks, with the same disgusting tyranny.

8. It is true, I never advocated the sudden emancipation of the slaves; and I do not know that the party, with whom you suppose me now to be connected, ever did; and how is it, that you and some others are found to keep at a distance, excepting when you are clothed in armour, from

O. Not, however, that I believe that he was, or would ever be, guided by the valuable labours of this fraternity. He is, if I have formed a correct opinion of him, a gentleman who would decide on any measures which it might be proper for him to pursue towards those under him, by facts which should come under his own eye, and not by the representations of others. He has seen too much of the planting business to need the assistance of a tale-bearer. If I had an estate he should have the management of it in preference to any one I know, until I could emancipate the gang.

You are at full liberty to send my two letters to *The Times*, or any other paper, as soon as you please, with the express understanding that Mr. Vaughan's are also to be published if I see cause to request it. I had no idea when, in your first letter, you so triumphantly mentioned this correspondence, that you had any design of publishing a part without the whole.

THOMAS COOPER.

Shelton, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, Jan. 31, 1824.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

MY correspondence with the Rev. Thomas Cooper, as I have already declared to him, is closed. His answers to the queries I addressed to him are in several instances direct and fair. Facts, connected with the history of his mission to Jamaica, have thus been elicited, which are not to be gathered from his letters, nor from the pamphlet entitled "*Negro Slavery*," and concerning the importance of those facts to a correct estimate of the value of Mr. Cooper's Report, the impartial public, if they have deigned to attend to our correspondence, will decide.

has been caused entirely by the insurmountable obstacles opposed to him by the Slave-system of Jamaica.

In proof of these conclusions I offer to produce my vouchers, (his own letters to Mr. Vaughan,) which, however, I am unwilling to publish without his consent, and most unaffectedly I repeat that, although these letters are, in my opinion, irresistible evidence of the justice of my inferences, they are yet highly creditable to his zeal and to his motives. Mark what is his reply in *The Chronicle* of the 6th instant—

“You are at full liberty to send my two letters to *The Times*, or any other paper, as soon as you please, *with the express understanding that Mr. Vaughan's are also to be published, if I see cause to request it.* I had no idea, when in your first letter you so triumphantly mentioned this correspondence, that you had any design of publishing a part without the whole.”

Sir, if Mr. Vaughan's letters exist, they are in Mr. Cooper's possession; and Mr. Vaughan, who is, as Mr. Cooper well knows, in Jamaica, would probably tell us, that of his letters to Mr. Cooper he retained no copies. I undertake for Mr. Vaughan that Mr. Cooper may, whenever he pleases, publish any letters which Mr. Vaughan has written to him; they would I doubt not, confirm the inference I have drawn from his own. Again, then, I ask him, will Mr. Cooper request the publication of his own letters, that he may have an opportunity of controverting my construction of them, or is he content that my inferences shall be taken for granted?

Here I would conclude, for I will not engage in a controversy with Mr. Cooper upon the vast subject of Negro Slavery, of which there would be no end, were I required to detect and to expose the fallacy of all his new hearsay stories and stale misrepresentations; but his last letter

unacquainted, and they are such as, in his opinion, rendered Mr. Cooper unfit for producing any useful effect upon the uncultivated minds of Negroes.*

GEORGE HIBBERT.

Portland Place, Feb. 12.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

I some time since received the permission of Mr. Samuel Vaughan, of Jamaica, to publish two letters addressed to him by the Reverend Thomas Cooper, should it appear to me that they would be instrumental in exposing the fallacy of Mr. Cooper's Report concerning Jamaica. For purposes which are stated in my correspondence with Mr. Cooper, I have alluded to the contents of these letters, unaffectedly declaring, that in my opinion they do credit to the writer's motives and his zeal, while they impeach the candour and accuracy of his printed Report. They are now published in consequence of the invitation of Mr. Cooper, he being left at liberty to publish the contents of any letters in his possession from Mr. Vaughan to himself. Mr. Cooper, however, has by accident, as it should seem, so disconnected our correspondence, that I am once more compelled to state, that upon these letters I seek to establish two facts, viz.

1. That the assertion which he has sanctioned, that "He does not recollect to have seen a single White man

* Soon after the above address appeared, the Editor of the *Chronicle* inserted a note, which I sent him, stating that Mr. Vaughan's letters to me were in my possession, and that I intended to publish them as soon as Mr. Hibbert might deem it proper to print mine. T. C.

opinion, that, in reason, civilization ought to precede evangelization. The mental and religious improvement of the Negroes is undoubtedly a work of time; but the first object should be to lay a good foundation, for, until we accomplish this, much substantial and ultimate good cannot be expected. I am unwilling to despair; but I cannot be sanguine. Since I was with you, Mr. Hibbert has expressed a wish that I should prolong my stay on his estate beyond the term of three years, which was originally stipulated for my residing in the island. This being the case, I shall most probably remain at my post another year or two.

"I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. ——. The exposition of the historical writings of the New Testament by Mr. —, you will be so good as to forward to Dr. — at your convenience. I have enclosed a few Numbers of the Christian Tracts, which, as a well-wisher to the best interests of the Negroes, I am sure you would wish to see dispersed among them, were they able to read them. You were so kind as to invite me to repeat my visit to — —, and which I propose doing if all is well, in the course of the ensuing dry season; much obliged by your past kindness,

"I remain, dear Sir, &c. &c.

"THOMAS COOPER.

"*To the Honourable S. Vaughan, &c. &c.*"

"*Hanover, 20th March, 1821.*

"DEAR SIR,

"I presume you have been informed that I have lately been spending a few days at Montego Bay, and that during that period I made several calls at your house, hoping to find you at home, as I felt a strong wish to see and converse with you once more on some points relative to the moral, mental, and religious improvement of the Negro Slaves, before I quit this island. I should certainly have remained

peculiar to themselves, and I must own that I regard them as being well calculated to bring about the much-desired, and certainly necessary, reformation. I regret exceedingly that my circumstances were such as to forbid me to act in a similar way.*

“ You have, no doubt, heard that we are on the point of leaving Jamaica : we expect to embark in about a fortnight on board the *Ann*, Capt. Hamilton. Had I consulted nothing more than my inclination, I should not have resigned my situation for at least another year or two. Mr. Hibbert wished me to continue on his estate as long as I felt myself useful to his Negroes ; at the same time, he was not disposed to second my efforts with that degree of assistance which I could not but regard as necessary to warrant the expectation of ultimate success. My decision was not formed in haste : I examined the subject on every side in the most impartial, deliberate manner ; and I can truly say, that I have adopted the course which I should have desired Mr. H. to adopt, had he been in my situation, and I in his. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. B——, I hope Dr. —— will be able to return the volume of Kenrick before I sail, as

* I have here cancelled two sentences which made part of this letter, as published by Mr. Hibbert. They have not, as far as I can see, any thing to do with the points in debate between that gentleman and myself ; being nothing more than remarks, never intended for publication, respecting the Missionary labours of the Wesleyan Methodists amongst the Negroes. Some of the expressions employed are strong ; and I have no wish to give them to the world in a second edition. Much as I differ in opinion, upon religious subjects, from the followers of the great Wesley, no one can admire more highly than I do their disinterested zeal in endeavouring to bring the heathen to what they regard as a due knowledge of the Christian Revelation. In many respects they have, doubtless, been the instruments of great good amongst the ignorant and vicious ; and may the blessing of Heaven still smile on their labours !

with the originals, that he may take copies, and employ them in any way he may think proper.

Mr. Hibbert has already, with my permission, laid the contents of two of my private letters to Mr. Vaughan, before your readers, in order, as he tells us, "to establish two facts," &c. (See pp. 29, 30.)

Whether those private letters, or any thing advanced by Mr. Hibbert, justify his inferences, the public have had an opportunity of judging. For my own part, I feel no sort of alarm, and see no ground for retracting a particle of what I have said respecting the religious character of the White gentlemen of Jamaica. But, to make his premises sure, Mr. H. has ventured on the dangerous and delicate practice of dragging individuals before the public, by name. He tells me, that I was acquainted with Mr. George Oates and Mr. S. Vaughan in Jamaica, and then endeavours to impress the public with the idea, that these gentlemen, who certainly are not Missionaries, formed so decided an exception to my general rule, as to destroy it altogether. This, however, I do not admit; and I pledge myself, if called upon, to produce satisfactory evidence of what I here assert. Mr. Hibbert must be aware, that it is one thing to countenance Missionary undertakings, and another to be personally religious. If Mr. O. and Mr. V. should be displeased with me for saying, thus publicly, that I do not regard them as persons who shew a serious regard about religion, and that I am prepared, if required, to justify this opinion by the publication of facts, they must blame Mr. Hibbert still more, who has forced me to this course on the ground of self-defence. The peculiar want of religion and morals in the West Indies, I attribute to the noxious influence of the slave system; and, if this hypothesis be correct, I would ask Mr. H. whether it does not constitute a strong reason for a change in the civil condition of the slaves?

have no connexion with Unitarian principles, and which are," as he can prove, entertained by me, "with which Mr. R. Hibbert was unacquainted, and they are such as, in his opinion, rendered" me "unfit for producing any useful effect upon the uncultivated minds of Negroes."* I wish Mr. Hibbert would be a little more explicit, and let us know what these "certain tenets" are, for I am utterly at a loss to conjecture to what he alludes. I have neither fears nor secrets in religion, and I shall deem myself unjustly treated, unless a fair opportunity is afforded me of vindicating myself against the above charge;—after making which, was it candid, was it honourable, in Mr. Hibbert, to declare to you, Mr. Editor,† before I had it in my power to reply, "*Here, Sir, on my part, entirely ends this correspondence*"? But as it might be too much, Sir, to expect you to renew the contest in your columns, I shall be contented to have the explanation I demand as a right, given in the *Monthly Repository*.

Mr. Hibbert complains, that the history of my mission does not include a view of my religious belief. This, I acknowledge, was a designed omission; for I did not see the necessity of giving a confession of faith, in connexion with what I had to say relative to the condition, whether spiritual or temporal, of the Negro slaves. But as something of the kind seems now necessary, I know not that I can do better than declare my hearty acquiescence in the following summary of doctrine, drawn up by an intelligent and learned Roman Catholic writer of the present day.

"All Christians believe," he says, "1st, that there is one God; 2nd, that he is a being of infinite perfection; 3rd, that he directs all things by his Providence; 4th, that it is our duty to love him with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves; 5th, that it is our duty to repent of the sins we

* See pp. 28, 29.

† See p. 34.

leading topics which all Christians in all ages have agreed to maintain. Speculations about the Trinity, the evil spirit called the Devil, election and reprobation, &c. &c., were never introduced by me to my Sable audience. My object was not to make proselytes to a party, but to lead my hearers from ignorance to knowledge, and from vice to virtue; but to do even this, effectually, was found, and, I fear, will ever be found, incompatible with that state of slavery which the planters are resolved to keep up in the West Indies.

To touch on every point in Mr. Hibbert's communications, is unnecessary; but there is one more which I cannot pass over. He talks of "the fallacy of my new hear-say stories and stale misrepresentations." Is this the language of a fair controversialist? He should prove the misrepresentations, as well as assert them; and we may safely conclude that he would, if it were in his power. I deny that I have, intentionally, misrepresented a single fact; and as to my "hear-say stories," they rest, in part, on testimony which he himself professes to respect. If they are "stale," it is because they are of a piece with what has been passing in the colonies for at least the last hundred and fifty years.

In conclusion, I must express my regret that a gentleman of Mr. Hibbert's universally-acknowledged respectability and weight in the community, should have mixed up with a controversy that involves consequences of the highest moment to nearly a million of his fellow-subjects, including the slaves and slave-holders, with personalities and contests about modes of faith. What has the failure of my mission, as he is resolved to have it, or my religious opinions, to do with the truth or falsehood of the particular facts which have given him and some others so much offence? In reply to what I have reported about the driving system, Sunday markets, the power of the overseer, the want of marriage

DOCUMENT
FROM THE JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE;
WITH REMARKS.

JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE.*

(1.) WE pledged ourselves, *some few weeks* since, to place before the public, in his proper colours, the celebrated Mr. Cooper, the reverend and respectable divine upon whose testimony the inhabitants of this island have been again stigmatized; and we consider this the proper time for redeeming our pledge, a pamphlet having made its appearance, said to have been written by him, † and which is commented on largely in the *Edinburgh Review* of February.

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(1.) The pamphlet alluded to in the opposite column, can be no other than that which is published by the London Anti-Slavery Society, entitled "*Negro Slavery*," and of which, it is well known, I am not the author. The article, indeed, which it contains, headed the "*Evidence of the Rev. Thomas Cooper*," I authorized the Editor to publish; and I have ever considered myself as responsible for the statements which are there brought forward. I gave my name, in the

* The daring and atrocious libel which I now submit to the tribunal of a candid and impartial public, appeared, I have reason to believe, in the first instance, in the *Montego-Bay Gazette*. The only copy of it, however, which I have seen, is that which I here employ, and which the Editor of the *Jamaica Royal Gazette* inserted in his paper of July 26, 1823. About the same time the same falsehoods also found a place in the columns of the *Jamaica Courant*.

† It is here insinuated, that it was the intention of the Journalist, *before* the appearance of the pamphlet to which he alludes, to animadvert on my character. He says, that his pledge "*to place me before the public*," was made "*some few weeks since*:" but he wrote this in July 1823; and, had his resolution been taken to hold me and my wife up to public odium *before* that work was published, he must have characterized his intentions as being *some months*, and not "*some few weeks*," old. My first letter in the *Monthly Repository*,

JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE.

We shall first state what we know of Mr. Cooper, and then say a few words on the acknowledged principles which govern the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* in his animadversions or commendations on any question.

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first instance, for the sole purpose of affording to all parties the fullest opportunity of investigating the representations which, as a friend to the improvement of the Slaves, I felt it a duty to send forth to the world, of their condition. I disclaim the idea of ever having indulged towards the planters, merely as such, the slightest feelings of hostility. It is their *system* with which I quarrel, and to effect the gradual destruction of which, I have willingly lent my humble aid.

I am charged with having stigmatized "the inhabitants of Jamaica." Is it meant that I have gone beyond the truth in what I have said respecting the morals of these people? If it is, I distinctly deny the allegation; and I can assure the reader, that I have reviewed my statements on this head, again and again, but without being able to discern the least ground for retracting a single iota from them. In speaking of the immoral influence of Slavery, I see no reason why we should not expose its effects

on the Slave question, is dated March 27, 1822, and the pamphlet came out in November of the same year. Now, it is evident, from all the circumstances of the case, that the letters in the *Repository*, and my *Evidence in Negro Slavery*, gave rise to his attack, and not that the appearance of the pamphlet merely suggested to him the redemption of a pledge which he had previously given.

JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE.

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on the Whites, as well as on the Blacks. Mr. Stewart, in his book, published last year, respecting Jamaica, has not scrupled to do this (see Chap. xi.) ; and, before him, Dr. J. Williamson committed the same sin, as may be seen, in quotations made from him, in pp. 56—59 of "*Negro Slavery*." To stigmatize a people, consists, if I understand correctly, in casting upon them unmerited censure. But this I have not done. I have acted a faithful part, and most deeply lament that it was not in my power to draw a more agreeable picture of the state of society in the finest of our West-India colonies.

(2.) Mr. Cooper, a Unitarian clergyman, was sent out by Mr. Robert Hibbert, in 1817, to his estate, Georgia, in the parish of Hanover, for what purpose we are at a loss to conjecture—certainly not to propagate the gospel, nor to instil into the Negroes the principles of the Christian religion.* A house that had been the residence of the former proprietors of the estate,

(2.) The purpose, and the only purpose, for which I went out to Jamaica, was to ascertain the practicability of improving the condition of Mr. Hibbert's Negroes by means of religious instruction, without, however, entering on any plans inconsistent with the order and management of the estate, or rendering the Negroes discontented in their situation as slaves.—The house

* This is the first time that ever I heard the purity of Mr. Hibbert's intentions, with respect to my mission, questioned.

JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE.

was appropriated to his use : it was decently furnished, and five or six Negroes, male and female, formed the establishment of domestics. A considerable salary was attached to the situation, and he was supplied from the estate with all the necessaries of life, and some of the luxuries.

(3.) Upon his arrival in the country, every facility was afforded him, in the pursuit of his mission, by those to whom it appertained to do so; and the Negroes of the estate, or a very considerable number of them, attended his first and second, and some of them his third lectures.* But his doctrine was new to them. Many of them had attended the Established Church, within a few miles of the estate; others had heard some of the Missionaries who had from time to time made their appearance in the country. By them they had been taught to believe in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of man: by Mr. Cooper they were told, that Jesus

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and furniture answered my purpose, but there certainly was nothing about either to boast of. My income was equal to my expenditure, and, if we take into the account several presents which I received from Mr. Hibbert, rather above it, yet not sufficiently so to make it a matter of importance to the public.

(3.) Upon my arrival in the country, the Negroes were informed, that my object in settling among them was to teach them religion, and that they were at liberty to form themselves into a religious society under my direction. They expressed a willingness to become my hearers, and did attend, in considerable numbers, my first two or three Sunday lectures, but afterwards fell off. This, however, was not in consequence of any objection which they, or any one else, had to my doctrine. Every word which my adversary says on this head, is utterly false; not to mention the ridiculous and extravagant idea of the Georgia, or any other gang, being able to take part in

* The lectures here alluded to, were delivered on a Sunday, and must be carefully distinguished from those mentioned a little further on, which were given in the week-time, a half-a-day being allowed for the purpose.

JAMAICA ROYAL GAZETTE.

Christ was a very good man, and a good preacher; but that he was not the Son of God, or our Saviour!! The Negroes, never having before heard such a doctrine, naturally inquired, "What sort of a parson is this our master has sent us out? He does not tell us what the other parsons have done, and he can neither christen nor bury us." They therefore ceased to attend his lectures; and their disinclination to do so, which arose from the nature of his doctrines, he has in his pamphlet falsely attributed to time not being allowed them. Anxious, no doubt, to make proselytes, and finding that the Negroes would not voluntarily go to listen to him, he applied to the overseer to oblige them, and to flog them if they would not. This the overseer positively declined doing. So far, then, as to the failure of Mr. Cooper's mission.

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disputes about doctrines. He must know that I might have preached Unitarianism in the morning, Church-of-Englandism at noon, and Methodism at night, without any chance of being detected by them. But the fact is, I did not, on any occasion, during the whole of my residence in Jamaica, preach on controversial divinity. My plan was, to insist on those great points which Christians universally regard as being at the foundation of all true religion; and, until I read the libellous production in question, I never heard of the smallest objection being felt, either by Blacks or Whites, to my pursuing such a course.

Some few of Mr. Hibbert's slaves might attend the Church three or four times in the course of the year, but certainly not oftener; and none of them, as far as I could ascertain, ever reaped the least advantage from this practice. They were too ignorant to understand the service, and were, therefore, nothing more than mere spectators. A few others were said to have been, while they belonged to a former master, hearers of some of the Methodist Missionaries; but I cannot believe that they were ever

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very regular in their attendance upon their teachers, or paid much regard to what was said; for, on examining them, I found them quite as destitute of religious knowledge as the rest. I say this, not out of any disrespect to the Missionaries, but merely to shew that the case alluded to does not contain any thing calculated to serve the purpose of the slanderer in the Jamaica Royal Gazette.

With the doctrines taught by the Missionaries, I have nothing to do; but I must declare, in the most direct manner, that the writer in the preceding column has added another to his list of falsehoods and wilful misrepresentations, by stating that I taught the Negroes "*that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, or our Saviour,*" because the contrary of this I uniformly preached to them, as I shall make it appear before I conclude.* The inquiries said to have been circulated by the slaves on this head, I never heard of while amongst them, and am certain they were never made.

It is true that I did not, for I could not conscientiously,

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christen the Negroes, though I was applied to by the overseer and some of the Negroes to perform the ceremony. The Scriptures are my guide in all matters of religion, and from them I learn, that men should repent, and be sufficiently instructed to form a rational belief in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, before they are admitted to receive baptism. Now, I did not perceive any evidence that the Georgia Negroes were thus far advanced in Christian knowledge, or that they had any disposition to break off their sins and lead new lives. Indeed, I well knew that this was not the case; I knew that they were all extremely ignorant of God, of Christ, and, of course, of Christianity; and that they were the slaves of sin, in some of its most odious forms. Their wish to receive baptism, was of the most idle and unsatisfactory nature. It arose from the mere circumstance of the slaves on some other estates having been christened, and the fact of our own White people having encouraged them, even in their unprepared state, thus to rush

* See my last letter in the Correspondence with Mr. G. Hibbert, pp. 37, 38.

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into the Church of Christ. No attention whatever was paid to the reason and fitness of the measure—and the whole might justly be termed a piece of daring hypocrisy. Knowing all this, what course was left for me, as an honest man, to pursue, but to refuse to be a partner in such a scene of deception? The rector of the parish, however, having no scruples of the kind, baptized these crude disciples, and pronounced them “*regenerate*.”

What is said about my not being able to bury the Negroes, is entirely false; for I buried many—alas! too many—while I was on Mr. Hibbert’s estate. I repeatedly offered to bury even the heathen amongst them, but was not permitted, the friends of the deceased deeming it improper to employ a Christian service over the remains of persons who adhered during their whole life to their African opinions and practices. But I was always sent for in the cases of those who had been baptized.

The assertion, so boldly made by the Journalist, that the slaves withdrew from my

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instructions on the score of my doctrine not being sound, has been already attended to; and I must here maintain, as fully as I have ever done, that, had their inclinations been ever so good, they had not time to attend me.* Let any candid person of a different opinion reflect on the circumstance, that these poor creatures are compelled to procure, by their own exertions, nearly the whole of the common necessaries of life, after their masters’ work is done. He demands their time from day-light in the morning till dark at night, with the exception of proper intervals for meals, the Sunday, and twenty-six or twenty-eight days in the year, which they are allowed for the cultivation of their provision-grounds. In crop, which lasts half the year, they are employed at the sugar-manufactory three nights out of the seven, without any additional rest in the day. The quantity of food which they receive from the estate, consists of no more than seven or eight herrings per week. The rest they have to make up in what is termed

* On this subject, I have recently spoken pretty much at large in a pamphlet entitled “*Facts illustrative of the Condition of the Negro Slaves in Jamaica*.”

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(4.) We now come to the private deportment of this humane, moral, and highly respectable clergyman and his wife. We have often had occasion to notice that persons recently arrived from the mother country, are less patient with, and less inclined to make allowances for, the errors of Negroes, than those who have been long with them. Such was the case with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper. For every trifling fault that the domestics committed, they were sent to the overseer to be punished:

given: but even these were allowed, in every instance, to escape with no other punishment than a remonstrance from me.

(4.) What degree of patience we had with the slaves who were placed under our more immediate care will soon appear. True it is that our Jamaica servants gave us an enormous deal of uneasiness. At times, they went through the duties of their station with sufficient propriety; at others, they neglected every thing and rendered our house one of the most comfortless abodes in the neighbourhood. But notwithstanding all this, only one instance occurred of either of them being sent down to the overseer for punishment. The

* In one of my letters in the *Monthly Repository*,* I promised to furnish the public with an account of a flogging which John Harden, my own waiting boy, received at my request: and I now proceed to redeem my pledge.

This boy was put into my service the day I arrived in the island; and at first he gave me every satisfaction. His work was light, and I may safely say that his situation was not more laborious than that of the majority of gentlemen's servants in this country. I taught him to read, and did every thing in my power to make him comfortable, not doubting that mild treatment would secure, for any length of time, his useful services. But I was completely mistaken; for, after the first six months, he began to relax in his duty, and to indicate an indifference to please me. I reasoned with him upon the impropriety of his conduct, and he promised to amend. For a short time he was as good as his word, and then became worse than ever. Again and again I called him to account, hoping that I might by remonstrance restore him to his former state of obedience. I spoke to my neighbours upon the subject, and also to

* See Mon. Repos. Vol. XVIII. p. 222.

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for he at first, supposing it was impossible that Mr. and Mrs. Cooper would send a Negro to be punished without sufficient grounds, complied with the request; but it at length became so frequent that he sent the Negroes back without correction.

(5.) Upon one occasion, in particular, a bottle of brandy was missing, and not being

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representation, therefore, on the other side is directly and completely false.

(5.) It is true that upon one occasion a bottle of brandy was lost, but utterly false that

the attorney and overseer for the estate, all of whom seemed to agree, that my measures were not sufficiently decisive, and some of them repeatedly recommended me to try the whip. This I was extremely reluctant to do, notwithstanding I saw that the other servants, as well as John, were determined to have their own way, and take every possible advantage of us. At last things got to so bad a state that I saw the necessity of effecting some alteration. The silver spoons after every meal were thrown down in the yard, instead of being put into their places, and the greatest confusion prevailed through the establishment. Things were wasted, and want was sometimes felt where there ought to have been plenty. Even the horses came in for an ample share of neglect; and in a word, nothing received its proper attention. To dwell in this state, was impossible; especially as it affected the daily comfort and happiness of my wife. Threatening had been so often tried, that it was found to be productive of mischief rather than good. On one or two occasions, I took a stick and tried whether a few stripes from that would not have a beneficial influence on this lad, and put the other servants somewhat on their guard. I was, however, deceived, for no one paid any serious regard to this, and we began to despair. Many times I saw Mrs. C. insulted, and did myself put up with language from the domestics, which I should not think of submitting to in this country, no, not for an hour. In this state, things remained till March 13, 1820, that is, rather more than two years and a quarter after we took up our abode on Mr. Hibbert's estate. On the morning of this day, John was so extremely outrageous, that I felt myself under the necessity of putting him into the overseer's hands, intending that he should confine him for a few hours, and then give him ten or twelve lashes. He, however, made both feet fast in the stocks, and kept him in that situation from about one o'clock in the day till the next morning, when he took the poor boy out and gave him a terrible whipping. I was not present on the occasion, and was never able to ascertain what number of stripes he received. The overseer went far, very far beyond my directions, and John was, in consequence, sadly overpunished. This I always maintained

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able to fix the robbery on any particular Negro, Mr. Cooper, with equal justice and humanity, sent the whole household establishment, men and women, down to undergo chastisement. Of this crime they were afterwards proved innocent; for, the overseer refusing to carry Mr. Cooper's wishes into execution, an investigation took place, in the course of which it came out that Mrs. Cooper had the inestimable prize safe in her own custody, intending it for her own particular use.—So much for their justice and humanity.

(6.) Mr. Cooper says, it is not surprising that the Negroes steal sugar, for the planters will not sell any in the country—and, that he was obliged to send to Mr. Hibbert for a barrel. “The fact was, that as much sugar had

upon the estate, as Mr. Oates, the attorney, well knows. After this, John conducted himself rather better for a short time, but again became refractory. I again remonstrated with him, but to so little effect, that I was obliged to change him. He was sent into the field to work with the gang, in which situation he remained when I left the island.

Such, then, is the history of the flagellation of the *only* slave who was punished by my orders; and could I have told to what lengths the overseer would have gone, even this lad, notwithstanding all the trouble he gave me for more than two years, would not have received a stripe. The affair, at the time, gave me the greatest uneasiness; and, in consequence of the conduct of the overseer, I should not have been able to resort to him again for assistance, in bringing the idle and disobedient to a sense of their duty, had we remained for years longer on the estate.

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any person whatever suffered for the crime. So far from this, it never gave rise to an unpleasant word, look, or feeling; though it might make us somewhat more careful, with respect to such things afterwards. Whether “this inestimable prize” was or was not found again I cannot now pretend to say: but I am certain that no particular investigation took place; and as to the atrocious insinuation against Mrs. Cooper, I shall only say, that it is of a piece with the rest of the horrid falsehoods, here put forth in so daring a manner.

(6.) I repeat that “it is not surprising that the Negroes steal sugar,” and that, in the parish where we lived, and I believe, from what I heard on the spot, in all others, the planters, as a general rule, refused to sell any to their

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been sent to Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, as would have been sufficient for the annual consumption of all the rest of the White people on the estate." Being called upon for a further supply, the overseer refused it, and, on inquiry, found, that Mrs. Cooper (we suppose to prevent the unhappy Negroes from stealing) had actually been selling Mr. Hibbert's sugar to his own Negroes.—So much for their honesty!

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neighbours. Calabash market* is the place where the great mass of the free inhabitants go to buy their sugar of the Negroes, though they know at the time that all which they expose there, or any where else, for sale, is stolen. On my return to this country I mentioned this circumstance to Mr. Hibbert, who expressed strong disapprobation of such dangerous folly,—and added, that he should have no objection to his attorney letting any person in the island have sugar, who might be disposed to pay a fair price for it.

The overseer never allowed us more sugar than we really wanted; and as to the charge of extravagance, I never heard it even so much as hinted at till now, and it is moreover quite without foundation.

Mrs. Cooper kept a small boarding-school, during a part of our residence in Jamaica, and the barrel of sugar which we were obliged to threaten to send for to England, was intended for the use of the scholars. Our first endeavour was, to obtain it from some neighbouring planter, but not being successful, we were told

* So called from the circumstance of the Negroes taking the sugar to market in calabashes.

that we might meet with a cheap bargain, at calabash market. Of this advantage, however, we positively refused to avail ourselves, and persisted in our determination to send home for a supply, which at length induced Mr. Oates,* Mr. Hibbert's attorney, to order the overseer to let us have what we wanted. Soon after this, a cask was sent from the estate, containing 300 pounds, for which I paid £10. 10s. currency. But Mrs. C. soon gave up her school, and having at the time a considerable part of the sugar left, she gave it to the servants; whereas her atrocious libeller declares "that she had actually been selling Mr. Hibbert's sugar to his own Negroes."

(7.) Another instance of this virtue in Mr. Cooper.— Upon his arrival in the country, at the recommendation of some of the inhabitants of Hanover, he made up his mind to open a school, and for the furtherance of that purpose, he requested a respectable merchant at Luces, to import certain books for him, of which

(7.) We sent to London for the school-books we wanted for our scholars, and never entertained the least idea of procuring them through any one in Jamaica. The only books which I ever ordered in that island, were a dozen or eighteen numbers of the Monthly Repository, which I took and paid for on their arrival.

* This gentleman was not of the number of those who advised us to go to calabash market, and his scruples about accommodating us arose from a fear lest he should be thought, by such a proceeding, to transgress the line of his instructions.

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he furnished the list. On the arrival of the books in the country, Mr. Cooper had changed his mind, and declined taking them—most of which are still remaining with the gentleman who imported them.

(8.) We now come to that part of their conduct and character that we would not insert, had we not the best authority for doing so. Alas! unhappy Jamaica, that the demoralizing effects of your climate, and the contagion of evil example, should not have failed to corrupt such double-fortified consciences as those of Mr. and Mrs. Cooper! We can, however, state with certainty, that while speaking of the continence, virtue, and sobriety, of the people of Jamaica, Mr. and Mrs. Cooper might have found room for amendment in themselves in these particulars. It was said, that the White carpenter on the estate was not an unwelcome visitor at

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Several merchants requested me, as a favour, to furnish them with lists of the best school-books, they being desirous of importing them, amongst other things, for sale. Now this, with the assistance of Mrs. C., I very cheerfully did; but it is utterly false, that the books were imported for me, or in any way to oblige me. (See S. M. Solomon's letter, at the end of this article.)

(8.) It is here pretended, by my traducer, that he has the best authority for what he advances respecting my character, and yet he does nothing more than deal in vague generalities. He fails to produce the *names* of the persons on whose testimony he relies; and I dare him to confront any individual with me, capable of giving the least countenance to his assertions. I am ashamed of nothing which I or my wife did in Jamaica; and we should hail an opportunity of meeting in a court of justice, in this country, any person, or persons, with whom we were acquainted in Jamaica, who may feel the least disposition to maintain the charges of imma-

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the pen-house—whether to Mr. or Mrs. Cooper, has not been stated. But it was notorious, that the secreted bottle of brandy was seized by Mrs. Cooper as her share of a gallon which had been received only a few days before.

(9.) And the day previous to Mr. Cooper's departure from the island, on a Sunday, in the presence of thirty or forty re-

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rality, &c., preferred against us in the other column.

The White carpenter did occasionally come to our house on a Sunday, and I believe he once or twice dined with us. We regarded him as being rather superior to the majority of carpenters whom we had seen in Jamaica. His name was Thomas Richardson, and I have some reason to believe he is now in this country. He was a married man, and had been in business for himself at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in which town his wife and children resided during the period we knew him in Jamaica. We took a pleasure in shewing him a few civilities, out of compassion for what we could not but deem his hard fate, in being so completely banished from his family, to witness the odious scenes, and put up with the inconveniencies of a residence on a sugar estate.—The brutal insinuation against Mrs. Cooper for our thus noticing this individual, is on a par with the tale about the bottle of brandy.

(9.) The Sunday before I left the island, I preached a farewell sermon in the overseer's house; about twenty-

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spectable persons, who had met to hear his farewell sermon, and who dined together with him at the overseer's house, he got so brutally intoxicated, as to be obliged to be carried from the table and put to bed.

(10.) Mr. Cooper has said, that he does not recollect to have seen a "single White man in Jamaica, who shewed any serious concern about religion, except some Missionaries."—It has come to our knowledge that this is a wilful and malicious falsehood. Mr. Cooper came to this parish, and visited an estate where service is regularly performed on Sunday, and where the children are instructed in the catechism of the Church of England. We know that Mr. Cooper expressed, to the attorney of that estate, his unqualified admiration at what he saw, and his astonishment at the correctness with which the children went through the catechism.

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five persons were present : after the service we all dined together, and about five or six o'clock in the evening I returned home, and what is said about my being put to bed, &c. &c., is entirely and maliciously false. I must, however, add, that Mrs. C. and myself were informed, the morning after, that certain individuals of the party whom I left at the table, remained all night, and gave way to much excess before they went to bed.

(10.) I repeat all that I have ever published, or sanctioned, respecting the moral and religious conduct of the inhabitants of Jamaica. I visited Flamstead estate in St. James's, (the property of Mr. Vaughan,) some time before I returned to this country, to which visit allusion is here made. The service on this estate is performed by a Baptist Minister, a native of America, but a mulatto. He is, I believe, a worthy man ; and I can assure the reader, that he has no very high idea, any more than myself, of the moral and religious character of the Whites in Jamaica. Will it be said that this gentleman, who is a Brown man and a

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(11.) We know, that at a gentleman's table in this town, where he broached his Unitarian doctrine, he was shewn that there was a serious concern about religion, by the reception his own peculiar tenets met with.

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Christian Minister, forms an exception to my offensive rule? Unless this is done, how will my statement be made to appear as a "wilful and malicious falsehood?"

The assertion is perfectly false that I expressed to the attorney of Flamstead "my unqualified admiration," at what I saw of the religious instruction of the slaves on that estate, or of the "correctness with which the children went through the catechism."

(11.) The town alluded to in the opposite paragraph is Montego-Bay, and the gentleman's table that of Mr. Vaughan. The conversation which was there carried on, was upon the subject of religious liberty and not upon points of doctrine. One of the editors of the Montego-Bay Gazette was present, and took a prominent part in what passed. Unitarianism was not, I believe, even alluded to; and what I contended for was, the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. The Catholics were mentioned, and I maintained that they were fully entitled to their claims. This, it seems, was too much for

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be this person ; and we do say, to make use of his own words, that he has published “ inferences, uncharitably drawn,” from a work replete with falsehood and malignity, and published, not for the benefit of society at large, but to answer the speculative ends of Mr. Cooper and certain merchants in Liverpool, who, a very few years since, were the principal owners of ships engaged in the Slave-trade.

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part I have acted in this business, was the grateful hope of being able to do a little good in the cause of justice and humanity.

I insert the following document, being persuaded that it came from the same source as the preceding, and which it will greatly assist the reader in explaining. The writer asserts, that I have “dared to impose on the public, in giving false and scandalous reports concerning the treatment of slaves in Jamaica.” The public will judge whether he has proved them to be so. He gives a sweeping statement, but does not quote, much less refute, a single fact which I have brought forward.

Duplicate, original per Dr. Butler, sailed in the Princess Charlotte, Capt. Payne, for Bristol.

SIR, *Montego-Bay, Jamaica, 1st August, 1823.*

I find in the *Edinburgh Review*, as well as in the Reports of the House of Commons, that the Rev. Mr. Cooper (lately residing in this island) has dared to impose on the public, in giving false and scandalous reports concerning the treatment of slaves in Jamaica. I have no doubt but the like imposition has been practised on your relatives. In order, therefore, to convince you and them how little Mr. Cooper's testimony is to be depended on, I take the liberty to hand

Christianity than the person who has now the honour of addressing you, and who is an Israelite.

I have resided in this island nearly six years : during that time I have travelled much ; and I will venture to assert, without fear of being contradicted by any impartial man, that the slaves in this island are much better fed and clothed than the workmen in our country, and the treatment is much more mild than what is experienced by the miners, colliers, and other labourers in the neighbourhood of our nativity. The slaves of this island have also much more enjoyment than the manufacturers, when even they have their pint of ale and a pipe in a public-house.

I confess, when I first arrived in this island, I was, like many others, much averse to slavery, and it must be allowed to have a bad sound in the ears of John Bull ; but after visiting several estates, as well as noticing the treatment of domestic slaves, I was very soon convinced that the slaves are much better off than the poor of Great Britain. Allow me to request the favour of your exhibiting the parts of the journals, as well as my letter, to your brother-in-law, Mr. Wilberforce ; to your relative, my Lord Calthorpe ; to my Lord Teignmouth (who is, I believe, President of the African Society) ; also to the Right Honourable Dennis Brown, to whom I have the honour of being personally known. I shall feel happy to afford you any information as regards the slaves and the island generally ; but I must beg to be understood, that I shall be guided by the strictest impartiality, and I shall not take a leaf out of Mr. Cooper's book.

I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

SAUL M. SOLOMON,

(Late of Great Charles Street, Birmingham, and Gloucester Place, London).

*To Richard Spooner, Esq.**

* Of the house of Spooner, Attwoods, and Co. (T. C.)

Copy of a Letter from the Rev. Thomas Cooper to Mr. Thomas L. Kearn, Lucea.

DEAR SIR,

I conclude from your note, that you have received by John, the 8 slates, 40 pencils, 300 quills, &c., which I sent to you by him a few days ago. Be so good as to let him have the two bottles of brandy you mentioned to me the last time I was at the Bay, and a tin pan of the exact size and shape of the paper he will give you. Should there be a packet, you will oblige me by sending me word of it by John, and directing him to call at the post office for my letters. The Sunday-School First Book cost 6d., the Practical Instructor, 4d., the pencils a farthing each, and the paper 15d. per quire. The prices are, of course, sterling.

I remain, Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) THOMAS COOPER.

Tom Spring, 21st August, 1820.

The books, &c. which Mr. Kearn sold for me, were my own property, and not Mr. Hibbert's, as Mr. Solomon falsely represents. They were sent out to Jamaica for me, by Mr. Eaton, of 187, High Holborn, London, as the following invoice will sufficiently prove. Those goods for which Mr. Frend paid on account of Mr. Hibbert, and which had not been used by the Slaves, were left on the Estate with Mr. Oates, the attorney, on my quitting Jamaica.

CONCLUSION.

I **FEEL** that I owe the public some apology for venturing to lay before them the above outrageous, abominable, and indecent attempt to blast my reputation, and that of Mrs. Cooper, in the estimation of every moral and upright mind: and had the Jamaica libellers strictly confined the circulation of their diabolical attack within the precincts of their own island, I most certainly should never have deigned to notice it in the manner in which I have done. But their Journals are sent over to this country, and put into the hands of individuals eager to catch at any charge, however atrocious, preferred against those who, out of compassion to the sufferings of the Negroes, and a concern for the interests of morality and religion, have ventured openly to impugn the Slave System. My evidence in the pamphlet called "*Negro Slavery*," was no sooner given to the world, than a plan was actually set on foot for the annihilation of my testimony by the destruction of my character. This I was apprized of long ago. Inquiries were sent out to Jamaica, and no efforts appear to have been left untried which could be deemed in any way calculated to assist in realizing the unrighteous design. Fair controversy was out of the question; and men like Mr. Solomon and T. Kearns not only allowed to fabricate and lend a helping hand, but to act a prominent part, in this shameful transaction. Falsehoods the most direct, scandalous, and wilful, have been uttered, and put on record in the colonial prints. But personal abuse, in defiance of all truth and modesty, is characteristic of those who war on the side of oppression and vice.

their opponents, if they could answer them? Is not the line of conduct which they pursue, the necessary consequence of having a bad cause to defend? I have published their own account of me, from a certain knowledge of its falsehood and malignity; for the public at large are interested in this question. But what crying abuse, what cruelty, oppression, or injustice, will any one venture to expose, if he is to be run down with atrocious calumnies; if his moral worth and religious principles are only to furnish materials for outrageous attacks on domestic habits and conjugal fidelity,—and for the fabrication of all that is base and unmanly, with the sole view of destroying testimony which otherwise can neither be denied nor answered? I might have accompanied it by many more remarks than I have, but did not deem them necessary.

THE END.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH REPORTS

OF THE

DIRECTORS

OF THE

AFRICAN INSTITUTE

READ AT THEIR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS,

*Held in London on the 11th day of May, 1824, and on the 13th
day of May, 1825.*



PHILADELPHIA :

PRINTED BY JOSEPH R. A. SKERRETT.

.....

1826.

INTRODUCTION.

THE exertions of the British nation for terminating the African slave-trade, and the increasing abhorrence with which that inhuman traffic is viewed, afford encouragement to christians in every part of the world, to contribute their efforts to banish this dreadful scourge from the face of the earth. Among no people, should a detestation of this commerce be more keenly felt, nor endeavours for its repression more earnestly made, than by the citizens of these United States. Declaring as they do in the face of the world, that all men are born free, and possessed of the unalienable right to the enjoyment of liberty and happiness, they should not rest satisfied with denouncing the trade in human beings as piracy, but their exertions should be unceasing, until this horrible commerce is totally extinguished. A just opprobrium has been stamped on this nefarious business; but let them not suppose, that the blood of this people is thereby washed from their hands, and that the part for them to perform in annihilating the sufferings and atoning for the wrongs of abused Africa, is fully accomplished. Are not Americans indirectly concerned in this abominable commerce, and still deriving large profits from it? There is strong ground to believe that this is the fact.

Remotely situated as the citizens of the United States are from the immediate operations and horrors of the African slave-trade, and relying on their positive disavowal of all participation in it, they may fold their arms and conclude that little remains for them to do. But the trade in human beings still exists, and is conducted with all its fatal effects, and to an unprecedented extent. Shall they then view with indifference and almost entire apathy, the accumulation of wrath and outrage, which is visited upon this people, their brethren and sisters, equally with them the objects of tender mercy and redeeming grace, and possessing the very same right with themselves, to that liberty, in which the great Creator originally placed the whole human family. Whilst there remains a ves-

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

EIGHTEENTH REPORT, &c.

NETHERLANDS.

THE Eighteenth Report of "The Directors of the African Institution, read at the Annual General Meeting held on the 11th day of May, 1824," states that an additional treaty "was signed at Brussels on the 31st of December, 1822, for more effectually suppressing the Dutch slave-trade." Its provisions are highly important, giving to our cruizers a right of seizing Dutch ships, not only when they have slaves actually on board, or when they have had them on board but have landed them in order to elude capture, but when they are found, within certain limits, with an outfit and equipment which show them to be *intended* for the slave-trade.

SPAIN.

It is now made the law of Spain, that all captains, masters, and pilots of Spanish vessels, who purchase negroes on the coast of Africa, or introduce them into any part of the Spanish monarchy, or are found with slaves on board their vessels, shall lose their vessels, and be sentenced to ten years' hard labour on the public works. It is to be regretted that these penalties should be so limited in their operation. They ought to extend to all Spanish subjects engaged in the slave-trade, as principals or agents.

The letters of the British Commissioners at the Havanna, however, clearly show, that, notwithstanding this law, nothing has been effectually done to prevent the importation of slaves into the island of Cuba. "In the present defective state of the Spanish law," they say, writing on the 22d of

devastation with them. Eight villages have been destroyed: the peaceable inhabitants, who did not perish in the ferocious attacks, have been made slaves; and such as were fit for market were bartered and sold to the European villain who commands the vessel, who styles himself, sometimes, Monsieur Jonquille, at other times Don Jonquillo." This person it is added, has, within eighteen months, by means of this nefarious association of the French flag with Spanish interests, shipped off five cargoes from the same spot.

"Havanna, August 30, 1822.

"We are happy to have an opportunity of reporting to your lordship a case in which the present local government here has manifested a disposition to check illicit traffic in slaves.

"On the 9th instant, the American brig *Eros*, J. Demeron, master, entered this port from Baltimore, having on board forty-two negroes. She was said to be bound to New Orleans, and to have come in here in distress. It is, however generally believed that the negroes were intended to have been disposed of at this place, if that could have been done with advantage to the proprietor.

"As soon as the Captain-General was apprised of the circumstance of negroes being on board of this vessel, he ordered her to put to sea with the least delay possible, and directed that a guard should be sent on board, in order to prevent the negroes from being landed, and maintained at her expense, during her stay in this port. The vessel sailed again for New Orleans, with the forty-two negroes on board, on the 11th instant." p. 60.

PORTUGAL.

During the year 1822, thirteen Portuguese slave-ships, having on board upwards of 1700 slaves, were condemned at Sierra Leone, for trading in slaves north of the line. Some of the cases involved perjuries without end, and atrocities of the most outrageous and revolting kind, and implicated in the guilt attending them Portuguese functionaries on the coast of Africa of the very highest class; and all of the cases afforded proofs of the most reprehensible disregard, on the part of the Brazilian authorities, of the stipulations of the treaties with this country. The licences granted to these ships permitted them, while their destination was declared to be to Africa south of the line, to visit St. Thomas's, Cameroons, Calabar, &c. which no motive could be assigned for their visiting, but that of carrying on an illicit slave-trade. Nay, the authorities in Brazil appear to have concurred with the contrabandists,

the Governor and still a member of the governing junta of that island, though only of the burden of seven tons, was sent to Calabar for slaves. Thirty slaves were purchased, and, having been put on board the boat, it made sail for Prince's Island. But the voyage proved tedious; provisions began to fail, and the allowance of food was reduced to one yam daily for two slaves. At last the provisions and water wholly failed. Ten slaves perished; and the whole must have shared their fate had not the vessel got back to Calabar, after having been six weeks at sea. The surviving slaves were in the most deplorable state of emaciation and wretchedness. Nor was this to be wondered at; for, besides their privations, they were manacled together, and cooped up in a vessel of only seven tons burden; having no shelter but what could be afforded by the space between the water casks and the deck, a space of seven inches!

Our government made use of these and other circumstances, as they occurred, to press upon Portugal, with an earnestness that does the highest credit to its zeal in this cause, the necessity of a more vigorous enforcement of her own laws, and of her treaties with this country; but apparently with little effect. Some fresh articles indeed were at length agreed to, similar to those adopted by Spain and the Netherlands, for enlarging the power of cruizers; but they have not yet been ratified.

On the separation of Brazil from the mother country, Mr. Canning lost no time in representing to the Portuguese government, that there could now remain no pretence for refusing entirely to abolish the slave-trade. It had been prolonged by Portugal solely for the sake of Brazil; and it now only remained to prohibit it entirely, under the Portuguese flag, to the south as well as to the north of the line. To this application, however, the most peremptory negative was given; and a threat was even held out, that, if Great Britain should proceed on this principle, Portugal would at once consider all her treaties with Great Britain as null and void. The necessity of continuing the traffic was also maintained, on a ground which until now had never been urged, or even heard of, and which is unfounded in point of fact; namely, that the slave-

coast being visited by British cruisers, three French slave-traders, as by the enclosed list, were met with and examined in the Calabar river.

“At the same period, the river Bonny was found swarming with slave-traders; and your excellency is furnished with a list of the vessels which abused and disgraced the French flag, four having their cargoes on board.

“On the line of coast between Sierra Leone and Cape Mount, one of his Britannic majesty’s vessels, during a cruise only of ten days, fell in with nine French slave-traders, of which I likewise transmit your excellency the names.

“Though these facts sufficiently show your excellency the advantage taken of the inadequacy of the regulations of France to put a stop to this odious traffic, there are other cases in which particulars cannot be obtained. Accounts of undoubted authority, and of recent date, from the factory of the Gallinas, state, that, in the course of last summer, three slave-vessels under French colours were lying in that port; that a large slave-vessel, fully laden, had sailed from Shebar under the same flag, ten days before; and that, about the same time, in the river Pongas, a French schooner, M. Dees master, took on board ninety-five slaves; while, besides the ordinary exportation in large vessels, an extensive carrying trade is kept up with the Cape de Verd Islands, principally by the small craft belonging to Goree and Senegal.

“There seems, indeed, to be scarcely a spot on that coast, which does not show traces of the slave-trade, with all its attendant horrors; for, the arrival of a slave-ship in any of the rivers on the windward coast being the signal for war between the natives, the hamlets of the weaker party are burnt, and the miserable survivors carried and sold to the slave-traders.

“It is clearly ascertained, by inquiries made on the spot, and on the adjacent coast, by his majesty’s cruisers, that the number of slave cargoes taken out of the river Bonny, in the preceding year, amounted actually to one hundred and ninety; and a similar return from the Calabar, for the like period, made a total, for that river alone, of one hundred and sixty-two.

therefore abstain from enlarging upon the refutation of allegations, which, I repeat, are already sufficiently disproved, no less by its actions than by its well known resolutions. I do not deny that certain avaricious speculators may have risked such expeditions in defiance of the laws; but these are only infractions, such as no government can altogether prevent; and perhaps it might not be impossible for me to discover, even in England itself, more or less recent instances of this nature. The king's government has been neither less active nor less severe than the English government, in detecting and punishing them. The measures which it has taken in this respect are such as it has judged necessary to ensure, in the most effectual manner, the execution of its own arrangements with regard to an object the importance of which it duly appreciates."

Again, on the 22d of November, 1822: "I have received, with the letter which your excellency did me the honour to address to me, the list of vessels which appear to have been engaged in the slave-trade during the first months of the present year. It must be confessed, that among them are to be found certain French vessels, though they never form the majority. This circumstance, which, doubtless, has not escaped your excellency's notice, will serve to convince you that the king's government is not neglectful of any measures of surveillance which lie within its power, in order to repress this odious traffic. Several severe examples which have been made, and punishments which have been decreed against those who have engaged therein, have already proved that the French government is no less earnest on the subject than that of England."

"I have lost no time in submitting to the Minister of Marine the observations which your excellency transmitted to me, relative to the measures adopted in England with respect to such vessels as, without actually having slaves on board, shall appear by their construction to be intended for this kind of trade. I doubt not that these measures will receive a strict examination on the part of the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre, since they may be made to promote the means of repression."

before. A list, indeed, has been exhibited, with a view to repel the imputation of supineness on the part of the French government, of the prosecutions which have been instituted on account of infractions of the prohibitory laws of France. This list, however, on being carefully examined, will really be found to prove nothing but the inefficacy of those laws, and the enormous extent to which the French slave-trade is carried on. It comprises all cases occurring since the prohibition of the slave-trade by France down to the end of July, 1823, and exhibits a total of 49 ships acquitted, 30 condemned, and 31 undecided. The list, however, is obviously most inaccurate, the same ship sometimes appearing under two of the heads; besides which, it may afford some means of appreciating its value, as an exculpatory document, when the meeting is told, that among the vessels *acquitted* are to be found the *Fox*, the *Succès*, and the notorious *Rodeur*. Even of the thirty vessels condemned, nearly half were condemned at the Isle of Bourbon, through the zeal and activity of that excellent governor, General Mylius, and were almost all petty traders belonging to the island; and four were vessels seized by British cruisers and sent to French ports, and proceeded against only in consequence of such seizure.

What France will do under these circumstances remains to be seen. No one can doubt for a moment, that it is completely in the power of the French government to put an end to the slave-trade if it pleases; but it is no less obvious, that, while the penalties attached to it are merely pecuniary, no degree of vigilance on the part of public functionaries can prevent its being carried on, so long as the profits will pay for insurance.

But, while the directors deplore most deeply the course of proceeding pursued by the French government respecting the slave-trade, and the failure of every hope which had been encouraged by its reiterated assurances that effectual measures of repression would be adopted, and by its warm professions of attachment to the cause of humanity; they feel, at the same time, the most lively satisfaction in contemplating the interest which the subject begins to excite in France. The meeting is already aware, that about two years ago a commit-

Admiralty, dated the 26th June, 1822, makes the following important observations:—

“The facts which have come to my knowledge, in my opinion, go far to establish this point, that the slave-trade will never be suppressed till the right of search be freely admitted, and every ship found with slaves on board, or evidently engaged in slaving, be liable to condemnation to such ship of war of any nation as may seize her.” While the slave-trade lasts, as a man can readily convert the person of another into cash, “with much less trouble than he could raise the hundredth part of the value by labour,” “it gives rise to every sort of dissipation and licentiousness, leading the mind of the more active of the natives away from the less productive and slower pursuits of agriculture and commerce.” But “wherever the traffic in slaves has been checked, the natives appear to have shown a fair and reasonable desire of cultivating the natural productions of their country. Our resident officers and merchants agree in asserting, that these would be raised to any extent for which a market could be found. I presume this is as much as could be expected from any people in a state of nature.”

“I am informed, it is almost impossible to credit the extent to which the slave-trade has been carried on in the Bonny; there having actually sailed from that river, between the months of July and November last year, 126 slave vessels, eighty-six of which were French, and the others Spaniards.

“An immense number have already sailed this year; and I find many more are expected, and have ascertained, from good authority, that they will generally be under the French flag—that is, they sail, with their slaving cargoes on board, from the Havanna, to a port in France, and there clear out, come to this coast under the pretence of purchasing palm oil and ivory, ship their slaves, and return to the coasts of Cuba thus inhumanly laden.”

“By the annexed boarding list, it will appear to their lordships, that, within a very short period, the ships of war on this coast have boarded forty-five vessels engaged in the slave-trade; viz.

"It is needless, sir, to swell this report with repeated instances of the cruelty and savage feeling to which this trade gives rise, in every shape of cool premeditated murder and shameless atrocity which avarice and a total disregard for the victims of it can suggest, as it best suits interested purposes. This has been laid before the world by writers perfectly competent to the subject. Nor let it be supposed, that any description of it has been too animated; it is impossible it could be so. It is necessary to visit a slave-ship, to know what the trade is."

"Wherever this baneful trade exists, the civil arts of life recede, commerce disappears, and man becomes doubly ferocious. It is scarcely to be believed, that an attempt was made to blow up a vessel, with upwards of 300 slaves on board, almost all of them in irons, by her crew hanging a lighted match over the magazine, when they abandoned her in their boats, and the Iphigenia took possession of her. Were this a solitary instance of the feeling which it elicits, it ought of itself to induce every European government to take effectual measures for its suppression; but, while succeeding years only bring forward a repetition of similar deeds, varied alone in form and guilt, hypocrisy itself scarcely dares to couple the name of Christian with that of its protectors."

"In bringing this Report to a close, it would afford me much real satisfaction, were I enabled, from what I have seen and heard on the coast of Africa, to hold out to their lordships any idea of the slave-trade appearing to diminish: the reverse is, I believe, the fact; for it is seen with fearless impudence establishing itself throughout immense territories, in open defiance of every restraint, particularly by the subjects of France, Spain, and Portugal, whose ships engaged in it are numerous beyond belief."

Extracts from the Nineteenth Report.

There has been hitherto no opportunity of advantageously resuming the conferences on the slave-trade which were adjourned from Verona to London. No general regulation

therefore has been adopted for its repression: but some progress has been made, in two instances, by individual treaties, towards affixing on this traffic its proper name and character, as a violation of the law of nature, and of nations, and of the common rights of humanity. All dealing in slaves by British subjects, from the 1st of January of the present year, has been declared piracy by act of parliament.

The Swedish government had previously published an ordinance putting her subjects engaged in it, out of the protection of the law; and a treaty has since been concluded between his majesty and the king of Sweden, for the more effectual suppression of the slave-trade, which provides the necessary measures for carrying the above declaration into execution.

A treaty of a similar description, founded on the same reciprocal recognition of the piratical nature of the trade, was negotiated between this country and the United States. Some difficulties arose in respect of its ratification; but every modification which could possibly be admitted in order to meet the views of that power having been adopted by this country, a new treaty has been arranged accordingly, and sent out to America.

America has shared with ourselves, (except as far as she inherited it from us,) the guilt of slavery; with the additional misfortune of having become habituated to view it face to face;—but she has, nevertheless, manifested her sense of the injustice and unnaturalness of the African slave-trade too strongly, to leave it possible that, under any feeling of maritime jealousy, or the remains of national irritation, she will long continue to refuse the permission of mutual search; in other words, the only practical expedient, for applying those principles which she has published to the world. It is nothing merely to give the crime the name of piracy, if the means of suppressing it, as such, are to be withheld. In that event the regulations of Spain, and the Netherlands, will be much more really efficacious; who, if they have not yet described the offence under its proper class, have nevertheless, by agreeing to the right of visiting and of examining suspected vessels, put into the hands of other countries an instrument for securing the due execution of their law.

Extract from "the Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser," 2nd April, 1825.

"We are credibly informed that three vessels, under American colours, are at this moment upon the coast for slaves:—one of them the Baltimore-built schooner, General Winder, Hill master, last from St. Thomas, carries 10 guns and a numerous crew; all of whom, with the master, are citizens of the United States. This vessel and another have their cargoes on shore at the Galinas and Cape Mount, the remaining one at Shebar. Thus we see these miscreants taking advantage of the absence of any American cruiser, and openly violating the laws of their country, notwithstanding the heavy punishment it subjects them to. We have here occasion to regret the failure of the negotiation for a mutual right of search, which would most probably, in this instance, have enabled our cruisers, who were lately here, to have prevented these robbers from carrying the intended victims of their cupidity and avarice from the coast." p. 220.

Every account from the coast of Africa, concurred in proving, that the slave-trade could never be extinguished, whilst the right of seizure was limited, as it was in the first instance, to the specific case of ships having slaves actually on board. Our treaties with Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, have to a certain extent, met this evil. Spain has consented that wherever there is clear and undeniable proof, that, in the same voyage where the vessel is detained, slaves have been on board, though they may have been subsequently disembarked, the vessel shall notwithstanding be condemned. Portugal adopts the same principle. The Netherlands, in addition, admit, that a certain equipment shall be taken as *prima facie* evidence that such vessel is employed in the slave-trade. The great defect in the provisions of these treaties is this: the letter of the original article, only comprehends the case, where slaves have been once positively embarked; and the subsequent extension in the treaty with the Netherlands, as to the degree of evidence which shall be in the first instance sufficient, seems, in the natural construction of the words, to imply, that this presumptive evidence of the employment arising from the nature of the preparations is to be deemed capable of being disproved by evidence, showing, that slaves had in point of fact never been received on board.—Surely the manifest and unequivocal equipment for a slave voyage should be deemed sufficient proof of the guilty destination. For un-

personal favour, she persists in professing to regard this honourable interference as the mere manœuvre of some selfish policy of our own.

The conduct of the French government, although less open and explicit than that of Portugal, is perhaps on this account only the more prejudicial. It perseveres in maintaining at the lowest possible point of practical effect, its co-operation with those humane and enlightened declarations, the verbal subscription to which it had not declined. France is the single government, which, proclaiming the trade to be unlawful, and well aware that its profits are in themselves an ample insurance against the mere risk of simple confiscation, refuses to adopt the only system which other states have found effectual, and to affix an infamous punishment to the offence. Whilst other governments, in evidence of their good faith, are acquiescing in a mutual right to visit and examine suspected vessels, thus precluding all evasion, and giving to every state the benefit of the exertions of the rest, France alone, though professing to act on the same principle, and with the same object, will not even enter into discussion, on what she affects to regard as a compromise of the honour of her flag. In November, 1822, our ambassador was assured by the French government, that the minister of marine should take into his immediate consideration the measures adopted in England, with respect to such vessels as, without having slaves actually on board, should appear by their construction and outfit to be intended to be so employed; but it does not appear, that the officers of the French navy, whose former orders expressly prohibited their interference in such cases, have as yet received any new instructions.

Nations, as well as individuals, are often found with points of honour too refined for ordinary understandings. Otherwise a plan which was cheerfully submitted to by the first maritime power in the world, as consistent no less with the interests of its subjects, than with the honour of its flag, might have been conceived satisfactory to the reasonable expectations, and to the dignity of France,—or it might be doubted whether it were really more honourable to any flag, that instead of condescending to arrangements indispensable to what

captain, who, without necessity, throws overboard the goods of his employers, is visited with the whole vengeance of the law; but if he takes on board a greater number of negroes than his vessel can conveniently transport to her place of destination, and, as has lately happened, quietly casts the supernumeraries into the sea, the crime becomes alleviated, and he escapes with comparative, nay with almost entire, impunity.

Public opinion, under the exertions of the abolition committee and other enlightened individuals in France, appears gradually to be acquiring a firmer and louder tone on this subject. Nothing in this respect can be more encouraging than the fact, that a petition against the slave-trade has been lately presented to both chambers. It is the first movement of the kind which the French public has manifested; and when we remember the small beginnings among ourselves, and the magnificent result which followed, too much importance can scarcely be attached to it. The signatures comprise the names of some of the very first merchants and bankers in Paris. Little can be added to the simple force of their remonstrance, and to the conclusiveness of such an inquiry as they propose. After stating the declaration of the allied powers against the slave-trade at Vienna, in 1814; that its abolition was recognized by France, in the year following, as having been agreed to; and that yet no law for its repression was enacted till 1818; they observe, that either the reluctant concurrence of the French government in this measure, or the inefficacy of the law itself, has ended by a contraband continuance of the trade, of which the emporium is Nantz. They express their surprise and sorrow at seeing, in the new project of the law against piracy and barratry, where the most severe punishments are pronounced against all injury to maritime property, that there is no mention made of a crime which consists in robbing whole tribes of their liberty through avarice, and in exposing to the most frightful death, from the tortures of a crowded slave-ship, beings, whom by the Christian religion we are enjoined to regard as brothers. The petition prays that the chamber will collect whatever evidence can be found of the fact of the slave-trade being carried on by French subjects, and in French ships; as it is plain, that, in general

blessings of civilized life,—not to go, guided by the spirit of Jesus Christ, that spirit of mercy and of peace, and carry to the inhabitants of Africa, the good tidings of salvation,—but to bear thither terror and desolation, to foment war and carnage, to pollute its shores with the most flagitious crimes, and to condemn thousands of innocent victims to the horrors of the middle passage, unparalleled in the history of the miseries of mankind.”

It is gratifying to observe, that the rising Republics of South America continue to identify their interests, and their own emancipation from political slavery, with the restoration to personal freedom, of the still more degraded members of the human family, the negro slaves.

By a decree of Mexico, every ship, whether national or foreign, arriving in their ports with slaves, is confiscated; a punishment of ten years' imprisonment is inflicted; and all the slaves on board are *ipso facto* declared free.

By the 14th article of a treaty made between Great Britain and the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, and ratified the 19th of February last, it is declared, that his Britannic majesty, anxiously desiring the abolition of the slave-trade, the United Provinces engage to co-operate in the accomplishment of so beneficial a work, and to prohibit, in the most effectual manner, and by the most solemn laws, all persons residing in the United Provinces, or subject to their jurisdiction from taking any part in the same.

Our legislation at home has, (with the exception of the act, declaring the slave-trade piracy,) been confined to the single bill already mentioned in two previous reports, for consolidating the abolition laws: this has at length passed into a law. One of its most important provisions regards the termination of the inter-colonial slave-trade. By one of its articles, the removal of slaves from island to island is permitted until 1827, under very definite and limited restrictions; and, in 1827, ceases for ever. In the mean time, permission is only to be granted upon application to the king in council, and on proof, to their satisfaction, that such removal is essential to the welfare of the slaves in question. All orders in council which

was sent out after them. Indeed, it seemed to be thought scarcely worth while to make a secret, or to affect reserve, either as to the extent of the French slave-trade, or as to the indifference with which it was regarded by French officers. Within the short space of two months the boats of the Maidstone visited nineteen vessels, all carrying on the trade; yet not one of whom, from the present state of our relations with France, or from the inefficiency of our treaties with other powers, was she authorized to touch. Ten of these were under French colours, furnished with French papers, and belonging to French ports. The object of the voyage was openly avowed and gloried in by some of the masters, who, on our officers going on board, scrupled not to explain, how their victims were to be classed, the particular parts of the vessel appropriated to each, how many they purposed carrying away, with other particulars of their horrible employment. All who choose to buy a set of papers, and a piece of white bunting in a French colony, may under the flag of France, obtain a sanctuary for their property and their crimes. The Maidstone in her cruize seldom saw a vessel which she chaced and came up with, but the first gun to heave to was a signal for the hoisting of this flag.

But the French slave-trade is not confined to regular voyages. It is said that every coasting vessel belonging to the French settlements of Goree and Senegal is accustomed regularly to purchase two or three slaves in each successive ship, and to import them into these settlements; that any of the inhabitants may, up to the present day, buy, on the main land or elsewhere, slaves whom he has only to take before the mayor to be registered; and that the French government itself is in the habit of making purchases from the inhabitants, and training the persons so purchased to serve in their garrisons in the forts at Senegal and Goree.

In April, 1824, the *Creole*, a Brazilian schooner, was sent into Sierra Leone by the Bann, Captain Courtney. The master of the *Creole* had freighted a brigantine under Spanish colours with 300 slaves, marked on the breast with the letter P. The brigantine, whilst carrying them off to Bahia, had taken the opportunity which slave-ships can so often

practise with impunity, of committing an incidental act of piracy upon an English schooner in her way.

The Victor, lieutenant Scott, sent into Sierra Leone at the end of May a slave-ship, *El Vincedor*, which had been piratically captured by *El Romano*, another slave-ship from the Havanna. A French lugger, *La Henriette Amicé*, whom the pirate had captured in the same manner, was abandoned on the appearance of the Victor, and run on shore in a heavy surf, where she immediately went to pieces. From the number of blacks seen on her decks, there was no doubt that she had embarked her cargo, all of whom perished. A Brazilian brig had sailed with 500 slaves the night before.

Within a few leagues of Prince's Island, the Victor fell in with a schooner boat called *Picaninny Mena*. Though only of five tons burden, she had taken on board in the Gaboon, besides her crew, water, provisions, and some cargo, twenty-three slaves, six of whom had already died. The boat was said to belong to the governor of Prince's; and as she could not, from her bad condition, be navigated to Sierra Leone, she was left under his excellency's care, with a statement of the case. Lieutenant Scott observes, that the negroes were in a state of complete starvation, and approaching dissolution: one died the day the boat was seized.

In August and September last, the *Diana* and the *Two Brazilian Friends* were sent into Sierra Leone by the Victor, Captain Woolcombe; in September, the *Aviso* was sent in by the *Maidstone*, commodore Bullen; and in October, the *Bella Eliza* by the *Bann*, captain Courtney. These four vessels—the first a Portuguese, the others Brazilian—have been subsequently condemned there by the mixed commission court. The *Diana* had 143 slaves on board when detained, of whom she afterwards lost 23 on her passage by the small *pox*. She had cleared out for Molemba, and had on board a fabricated log purporting to be her journal from that place; but it appeared, by the declaration of her master, that she had taken in her slaves at the river Benin. "Of all the vessels I was on board of," says Captain Woolcombe, "this was in the most deplorable condition: the stench, from the accumulation of dirt, joined to that of so many human beings packed

together in a small space, (the men all ironed in pairs,) was intolerable. To add to the scene of misery, the small-pox had broken out among them: nine died before we took possession, and one almost immediately after our first boat got along side." The Two Brazilian Friends had 257 slaves on board: she was one of thirteen which sailed about the same time from Bahia to Badagry on the same errand. She had been previously boarded at different times, both by the Maidstone and Bann; but in vain, as the slaves, though then assembled on the beach, had not been on board. Commodore Bullen, who visited this ship, says, "Its filthy and horrid state beggars all description: many females were far advanced in pregnancy, and several had infants from four to twelve months of age; all were crowded together in one mass of living corruption, and yet this vessel had not her prescribed compliment by nearly one hundred."

The Aviso had 465 slaves on board; of whom 34 died after their capture, notwithstanding every attention. Such was the filth and crowd that not half could have reached the Brazils alive. Commodore Bullen put the crew on shore in Prince's Island. These wretches, as soon as they found that they must be boarded, had stove in her boilers, as a last malignant effort to add to the misery of those whom a few minutes would place beyond their power. Commodore Bullen found this vessel in a most crowded and wretched condition, although she had on board 120 less than directed in her passport from Don Pedro, the emperor of the Brazils. At the date of her capture, she had scarcely twenty days' provisions for the slaves, and less water. How they intended to subsist them till their arrival at Bahia, (says the captain,) "is to me a problem, unless they could have calculated on a great decrease from death."

The Bella Eliza, cleared out for Molemba, but took in her cargo at a place known only to slave-dealers by that fraudulent designation; but which is, in fact, the western bank of the river Lagos. She also had been twice boarded by the capturing ship, before, by embarking her victims, she had become liable to be detained. According to the tonnage, as stated in her passport, she was privileged to take 368 slaves:

she had taken on board 381, being thirteen more even than this allowance, of whom twenty-two died before they reached Sierra Leone. The passage lasting seven weeks, the suffering from want of water and provisions was so great that in two days more all hands must have perished. Upon an accurate inspection of these four vessels, to ascertain whether they answered the description in their papers, a remarkable discovery was made of the corrupt and cruel connivance of the official authorities of the Brazils. The tonnage of every vessel is entered in the royal passport, and permission is given to carry a cargo in proportion to that tonnage at the rate of five slaves for every two tons. On admeasurement, the real tonnage was found, in every one of these instances, to be so much less than the tonnage stated in their passport, that the *Diana*, according to its passport, was in fact authorized to take five to each ton; the *Two Brazilian Friends* four to each ton; the *Aviso* above five to each ton; and the *Bella Eliza* at the rate of nearly seven to every two tons. The men's slave-room in the first was only two feet seven inches high, in the second two feet, and in the third two feet three inches.

Taking into calculation the size of the womens' room, and the number shipped, little more than three and one-fourth square feet was allowed to each adult. Indeed, had they attempted to put on board the number to which, according to the false description thus sanctioned by the Brazilian authorities, they would have been entitled, they could not literally have been stowed; although they are stated to have been packed under deck, on deck, and in boats, like beasts. Some of these vessels had on board fierce dogs of the blood-hound species, natives of the Brazils, trained to sit watching over the hatches during the night, lest the wretched beings below should rise either for resistance or for air. Not but that all the precautions which cunning and ferocity can suggest run a risk of being defeated.

In January of the present year, the slaves, (132 in number,) on board *Les Deux Sœurs*, a French cutter, rose on the crew after leaving the *Sherbo*, and murdered eight of them. She was afterwards seized near *Factory Island*, and towed in by an English vessel, and has been since condemned.

Persons who make a trade of human misery are not likely to trouble themselves much about human life. They throw the bodies overboard, whether alive or dead, with much more apparent indifference than they would the sum which they have given for them.

One Oiseau, commander of a French slave-ship called *Le Louis*, having completed his cargo on the old Calabar, thrust them all between decks, (a height of only three feet,) and closed the hatches on them for the night. Fifty were found dead in the morning. As a matter of course, he only immediately returned on shore to supply their place. Captain Arnaud, of the *Louisa*, arrived last April, (1824,) at Guadeloupe with 200 negroes, the remainder of an original cargo of 265. Having by mistake purchased more than he could accommodate, he had thrown the odd 65 into the sea.

This brutal hardness of heart is the natural and necessary characteristic of the system. To be captain of a slave-ship is an office that can be only filled by one who has nothing human about him but the form. Facts too, like these just mentioned, are not extraordinary incidents, selected and remembered as such. They are the staple of this trade; and as they are found to belong to almost every instance, which, by being detected, affords an opportunity of being examined, it is mere credulity and blindness not to transfer the picture to the rest. There is not more of cruelty, it may fairly be assumed, in the one vessel which is captured than in the one hundred which escape. Some of those have made eleven, some thirteen successful voyages, and there is little doubt that similar acts of atrocity may have accompanied them all—the same accumulation of human agony, and the same waste of human life.

The French and the Portuguese, though shamelessly pre-eminent, have not a monopoly of this infamy, and of these wholesale murders. Forty-four vessels sailed from the single port of the Havanna for the coast of Africa; and seventeen arrived there from thence, during the last year. Up to February 14th of the present year, two more had sailed, and two cleared out thither, and seven had arrived thence. Captain Forbes was informed that seven sailed in one day whilst he was there; and the Columbian privateers had then lately cap-

tured three with slaves actually on board. Our consul at Cadiz has communicated notice of two Spanish vessels being fitted out in that port last July, and his belief that four more were about to be taken up for this inhuman traffic. "Facts so notorious to others," he adds, "cannot be unknown to the Spanish authorities here, who have in my opinion facilitated the object of the owners of these vessels by granting them licences to carry guns." The owner of one of them, of the name of Tinto, said they were well paid, if one out of four escaped capture.

In January of the present year, a schooner called "the Flower of the Sea," under Dutch colours, was captured by a Columbian cruiser, and the Grecian, Lieutenant Cawley. She was well provided with every thing requisite for carrying on the slave-trade. The captain when examined, (January 4th, 1822,) accounts for his having thrown his papers overboard, by stating them to have been Spanish, and furnished him by the governor of Cuba, and that the schooner was actually Spanish property, and belonged to a M. Dutocq, of Cuba: whereas, on the day before, he had stated her to be the property of a Mr. John Martin, of St. Eustatius. This Mr. John Martin appears to be a Mr. Nathaniel Mussenden, a member of the council of police of St. Eustatius; and this Mr. Mussenden had obtained from the Dutch governor of that place a passport and Dutch flag only on the 11th of December preceding; and though described therein as "the much respected," yet it seems he was so far a suspected person that he had been obliged to enter into a bond of 1600 dollars with the governor, that the vessel should never at any time be found employed under the flag of the Netherlands in the traffic of slaves. But the honourable precaution thus taken by the governor of St. Eustatius was easily evaded. The above named M. Dutocq, along with a letter of credit for 12,000 dollars on the house of Messrs. Cabot, of St. Thomas, and a letter of introduction "for their excellent advice and aid in the accomplishment of the captain's views," gives the parties an express indemnity against this very bond. A letter from this French slave-agent to Messrs. Bannaffe and Lariviere, of Gaudaloupe, was found on board. This specimen of West

Indian correspondence seems a sort of circular, soliciting for custom, and is evidently drawn up in the fashionable language of the trade; language which is calculated to make all except those consignees of human beings, shudder when they reflect on the depth of moral debasement to which it seems our nature may be reduced.

This letter bears date the middle of last December. It opens the secrets of the prison house. It shows the wretched state of damage and of suffering in which the slaves arrive, and the corrupt subservience of the authorities of Cuba down to that time. It holds up to view devoted commandants, and public sales of slaves; the continued success of the Nantz merchants; the scandalous and boasted abuse of the French flag; as well as the language and the feeling of the French and Spanish portion of the West Indies. The following is an extract from it:—"Under the auspices of Mr. Couronneau of Bordeaux, our friend, we have the honour of tendering to you our services at this place. You know, gentlemen, that the advantage which our market offers for the disposal of *Ebony* gives it a great preference over any other of our colonies; and it strikes us that it would suit you to send to it a few shipments of that sort. We have received this year a great many cargoes of that article, on account of merchants of Nantz: and towards the end of January, we expect here, other ships that have sailed from the last-mentioned port. All our sales have been attended with favourable results. The last cargo sold here, was that of the Harriett of Nantz: 328 logs were disposed of on their landing, (those that were damaged excepted,) at 225 dollars each. This merchandise was of a very ordinary nature, and had suffered much: by getting rid of the article at once you may make a much better thing of it." After some particular instructions it proceeds: "The commandant, who is devoted to us, would deliver a letter of instructions for the captain: when once the cargo is on shore, all risk is at an end.—We have this day to communicate to you a circumstance that will no doubt afford you as much interest as it does to us.

"The brig, 'Two Nations,' Captain Pettier, which had lately been captured by an English cruizer, (at the moment when she appeared before Uragua with a cargo of ebony,)

and carried to Kingston, has been released; the admiral having declared that no one had the right of capturing the French flag: in consequence of this, the brig returned to Uragua, where she landed 456 logs. Had the wood been good, it would have had a fine sale; but owing to the bad state of the bulk of the cargo, which had suffered much, it is of the smallest kind. The liberation of this vessel offers to us the assurance that our flag will henceforth be respected. The three vessels that were cruising upon our coast were immediately recalled to Jamaica. As to the Dutch, there is only one English vessel of war in our latitude commissioned to capture them; the others are altogether interdicted that right. We consider, therefore, that there is no longer any risk upon our coast; and that vessels may present themselves with all safety before Uragua, where we constantly keep a pilot. The sales meet with no opposition, and are carried on in some measure publicly."

King Radama had suppressed the slave-trade through the whole extent of Madagascar, which is subject to his dominion. To that part of the island which does not acknowledge his authority, he sent an army last summer to compel their submission. The result is not yet known. The French claim sovereignty at a place called Fort Dauphin in that quarter, where they maintain an agent. From an entrepôt in its neighbourhood, they are carrying on an active slave-trade with the eastern coast of Africa; and they have two vessels constantly employed in bringing over slaves, whom they afterwards put on board smaller craft for the supply of Bourbon.

Commodore Moorsom was sent last summer to remonstrate with the governor of Mozambique, on the French slave-trade being permitted in that Portuguese territory. The governor admitted the fact and its illegality, but pleaded that he had no means of stopping it. Commodore Moorsom, on the contrary, believes that he connives at it, and that he had even received 4000 dollars, on account of slaves shipped by French traders, during 1823. The duty on slaves from Mozambique, in 1823, amounted to 66,000 dollars, and was raised on the sale of 16,500 slaves.

The French obtain their slaves in great measure from the native chiefs on the coast between Cape Delgado and Quiloa, who are subject neither to Portugal nor to the Imaum of Muscat, and also from Quiloa. Captain Owen in confirmation of this statement, observes that the slave-trade on the eastern coast of Africa had received a new impulse for the supply of Brazil. This diabolical commerce seemed the only one capable of inspiring the miserable remains of the Portuguese population with energy. He found seven vessels in the port, preparing their cargoes for Rio Janeiro; one of 600 tons, for 1200 slaves. The annual number exported from Mozambique, he computes at 15,000, being 1500 less than that on which duty was paid in 1823. The number exported from Quilliman in 1823, he estimates at 10,000 more. A slave in the first instance, he observes, does not cost more than two or three Spanish dollars to the Portuguese dealer, who obtains for him twenty or thirty dollars from the captain of the vessel, and who again sells them at Rio Janeiro, for 150 or 200 dollars. Some vessels are so fortunate, he says, as to save alive half their cargoes; but it is considered, on the whole, an excellent voyage where they save one-third. The country round Quilliman formerly supplied Mozambique with food, and is capable of producing it to any extent; but since the slave-trade has been carried on there, it not only has no surplus produce to export, but is become itself dependent upon foreign supply for its subsistence. The neighbouring tribes are kept in a constant ferment by the slave-trade. Captain Owen states expressly, that the commandant of the Portuguese factory had himself provoked wars between the different tribes, that he might get slaves cheap, and that for each of them, he actually paid in goods no more than about half a dollar. He felt himself obliged to remonstrate with the government of Mozambique on the continued infractions of the existing treaties between our nations, which it was his misfortune to witness; and he has informed our government, that "all the Portuguese authorities, every where on the coast, still either enter into, or take part in this infamous trade, with such adventurers as present themselves in its pursuit, or by their connivance and imbecility afford such facilities to

their success as cannot fail to render vain its total suppression."

The civilization of Africa can never proceed until the slave-trade is put down beyond a hope or possibility of return. To suspend it, to alternate between a year of repose and a year of plunder, to give the bud just time to germinate, and then to tread it under foot, is little better than a machinery for adding to the growth and the number of the victims, and for rendering, by the contrast, their sufferings more intense.

The appearance of a slave-ship demoralizes the whole neighbourhood: it offers a premium on their evil passions, which the slave-trading chiefs cannot be expected to resist, till a long experience of the benefits of a contrary system has weaned them from their former habits.

The trade from the Sherbro to Mesurado, which had of late been comparatively free, is now as bad as in former times. The wars there, for the supply of the *Gallinas*, have again laid waste that fertile country, which had begun to thrive after the cessation of the British slave-trade. The hostilities in which these slave-haunts are now themselves involved, are owing to the two causes, avarice and vengeance, both equally arising out of the slave-trade. The nations at their back, jealous of the monopoly which was obtained by their position, have borne down on them to seize, by force, a partnership in its spoils; whilst other natives from the interior, have been combined and brought down to the coast by the villainy of the chiefs of the slave-factories on the river. At times, when there was a scarcity of slaves, they have completed their cargo, by seizing and shipping off whole caravans of free men, who were bringing their produce for barter. It seems that these chiefs, speculating on the interests of their own slave-market, invited the *Kissoos* in the first instance to commence this war on the *Bulloms*, and that, by a just retribution, the *Kissoo* head-men now threaten to pay off their wrongs, by burning every village which these mansellers possess.

The merchants of the *Isles de Loss*, taking advantage of a diminution of the slave-trade, endeavoured to replace it by

lawful commerce, and, during the three first months of last year, exported from the river Nunez, 12,000 hides, besides wax, ivory, rice, and gold: but a few months later, and a Spanish slave-vessel arrived; and although all the white traders, except a Portuguese, refused to have any thing to do with it, yet the natives were so unsettled by the temptation of those articles, which any trade consistent with their improvement must have more slowly and laboriously supplied, that they threatened to destroy the house of an individual who requested the captain to move the vessel from his wharf. But Bissao is the great curse of northern Africa: and the Portuguese, not content with the distinction of being the only European nation which authorizes, by law, the purchase of human beings, have lately saved themselves, in more than one instance, the expense of the purchase money. After attacking native towns in the night, and killing all who resist, they have kidnapped the survivors for themselves. Whilst two respectable merchants of the Isle de Loss were in the Rio Nunez, one of these expeditions entered, burnt a town, and carried off eighteen inhabitants to Bissao. As long as that wretched country may either be thus bribed to relapse, or be forcibly plunged into such horrors, little can be attempted in the furtherance of the objects of this institution, in comparison with those results which arrangements of ordinary justice and security might of themselves accomplish. Men will not sow a field to-day, which is to-morrow to be the place of battle. The present king of the Soolimas, in his conversations with Captain Laing, recurred frequently to the strong temptation to continue the trade in slaves, whilst white men could be found to purchase them: because money, (he said,) was got for them so easily and certainly, whilst new modes were doubtful until tried, and might take much trouble to establish. Here is a great and immediate cause of the degradation of Africa, for which Europe is mainly accountable, and which Europe can remove. It ill becomes those who were fearless and indefatigable whilst they were guilty and unjust, to show themselves faint-hearted and easily discouraged, as soon as they have commenced their work of re-

paration and of mercy. We are not entitled to weigh in golden scales our labour and its results. We are in the situation of persons who have committed the grossest of all injuries, and when called upon for compensation must not seek to avoid it, by collateral inquiries into the character and merits of the individuals we have wronged. But taking it most strictly, it is only when a sufficient period shall have elapsed after a total suppression of the slave-trade, for its last effects to have died away, that the time will have arrived, when, with the least decency or pretence to fairness, any one can pronounce a judgment against the capabilities either of Africa, for an extended commerce, or of its inhabitants for the arts and institutions of Europe. That the slave-trade is directly answerable for that alleged inferiority of which it afterwards seeks to take such criminal advantage, is proved by a fact which has been often adverted to, and in which Africa is an exception to every other quarter of the globe. Civilization elsewhere, naturally growing out of commerce, has been first seen on the shore, and by the river side: and has afterwards crept on by degrees into the more inland country. But Park found the interior of Africa in an advanced condition compared with the coast; and Captain Laing, in his late journey from Sierra Leone to Soolimana, a distance less than that between York and London, observed the same successive degrees of civilization, approaching almost to different stages of society, as he receded from the slave-trade and the sea. The Soolimas were more intelligent than the inhabitants of any country through which he had passed, to reach them; and the people of Sangara, who lay in a line more backward still, were proved, by their manufactures and their arts, to be proportionably further advanced. Thus has this horrible commerce reversed a law in the history of the human race, so that the improvement of a nation is measured by the difficulty of its communications. A lawful commerce and a pure religion will be alone sufficient to remove this anomaly and reproach.

THE END.

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